

False Alarm Bylaw Now in Place

On August 20, 2018, City of Parksville Council approved an updated False Alarm Bylaw which enables the City to increase enforcement when multiple false alarms occur on a single property and to recover some of the costs for responding to the calls.

Why is the City implementing this bylaw?

False alarms have a significant impact on the operations of both the Parksville Volunteer Fire Department and the Oceanside RCMP. Effective August 21, 2018, the City will invoice property owners for false alarms in order to encourage people to reduce false alarms which cause an unnecessary expense and also have the potential to take the RCMP and firefighters away from true emergencies.

What is a false alarm?

A false alarm is the activation of an alarm system resulting in the attendance of the RCMP or the Parksville Volunteer Fire Department at the property when there is no apparent or actual evidence to merit such a call. (See Bylaw 1542 for full description). This also includes situations where the alarm system has malfunctioned, been activated in error or has been activated during testing.

What are the responsibilities of owner/occupiers?

- The owner or occupier of a premises shall be responsible for the proper use, maintenance and operation of any fire or security alarm system installed in or on the premises in order to ensure the prevention of false alarms.
- Every owner or occupier of a premises at which an alarm system is installed must, within 72 hours of installation of the system, advise the Fire and Police Department by way of written notice of the names, addresses, contact information of the monitoring service and at least three contact persons for the property. Owners are responsible for notifying the Fire and Police departments immediately if this contact information changes.
- Every owner or occupier of a premises at which an alarm system is installed must notify the monitoring station, and if necessary the Fire and Police departments, at least thirty (30) minutes before testing or repairing the alarm system.
- The owner or occupier must install, maintain and operate the alarm system in a manner that ensures prevention of false alarms.
- No person shall prevent or obstruct or attempt to prevent or obstruct entry of any City employee authorized to enter upon property by this bylaw.

What are the fees/penalties to be charged for attendance at false alarms?

In any twelve month period, if the fire department or RCMP respond to more than two false alarms originating from the same property, the owner or occupier of the property, or both, in which the alarm system is installed will pay a fee to the City of \$250 for the third and any subsequent false alarm.

In any 24 month period, if the fire department or RCMP responds to more than four false alarms from the same property, the owner or occupier of the property in which the alarm system is installed will pay a fee to the City of \$500 for the fifth and any subsequent false alarm.

Any fees imposed under this bylaw shall be due and payable within 30 days of invoice. If the fees are not paid by December 31 of the year in which they are imposed, the amount is added onto the property owner’s taxes at the end of the calendar year in which the infraction was issued. Once this charge is added to the taxes, it becomes “taxes in arrears” and is subject to interest charges.

The charge for each false alarm that the Parksville Fire Department or RCMP attends is as follows:

Bylaw Section	Description	Penalty	Early Payment, Penalty Discount	Late Payment Penalty
3(1)	Improper use, maintenance of operation of alarm system	\$150	\$112.50	\$187.50
3(2)	Fail to provide sufficient contact information for contact persons	\$150	\$112.50	\$187.50
3(3)	Fail to provide sufficient notification before alarm test or repair	\$150	\$112.50	\$187.50
3(4)	Inadequate false alarm prevention	\$150	\$112.50	\$187.50
3(5)	Obstructing a City employee or officer	\$500	\$375.00	\$500.00
4	Fail to confirm validity of alarm prior to notification of police or fire department	\$150	\$112.50	\$187.50

###

For more information, please direct inquiries to:

Parksville Volunteer Fire Department
fire@parksville.ca; 250 248-3242