

City Of Rochester Hills

2007 False Alarm Ordinance Questions & Answers

(1) WILL THE NEW ORDINANCE APPLY TO 9-1-1 CALLS OR REQUESTS FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE?

A. No. No one should ever be discouraged to call 9-1-1. Even if the 9-1-1 call is accidental or mistaken, it will not be considered a "false alarm" under this ordinance. The intent of this ordinance is only to reduce response to alarms that are the result of mechanical failures, poor maintenance, improper installation or negligence.

(2) I HAVE AN ALARM SYSTEM AND HAVE NEVER HAD A FALSE ALARM. WHY DO I HAVE TO REGISTER MY ALARM?

A. The focus of the new ordinance is not only to address false alarms, but to register all alarm locations so that regardless of whether the alarm is false or real, responding officers and our Central Dispatch will have accurate and current information on file to enable us to have a contact that can immediately respond at the time of the event. For example if we find a business with an open door in the middle of the night, we can have someone come down to secure the window or door. Also remember that although many alarms are monitored systems, many more especially in residences are systems that are installed by the homeowner and we have absolutely no information on who to contact in an emergency. When we lose time waiting for someone to come to the scene, we are tying up an officer who must remain on scene to secure the building contents until relieved by the homeowner or company representative. Even monitored systems often times provide us with outdated or incorrect contact information.

(3) I HAVE AN ALARM SYSTEM THAT IS MONITORED BY A COMPANY. IN THE EVENT I ACCIDENTALLY SET OFF MY ALARM AND THE COMPANY NOTIFIES OAKLAND COUNTY TO CANCEL, WILL THIS BE CONSIDERED A FALSE ALARM UNDER THE NEW ORDINANCE?

A. Pursuant to Sec. 42-34 Alarm Reporting, no false alarm fees shall be charged for cancelled calls.

(4) DURING THE LAST STORM I LOST POWER AND MY ALARM SYSTEM WAS ACTIVATED, UNDER THE NEW ORDINANCE IS THIS CONSIDERED A FALSE ALARM?

A. No. The term "false alarm" does not include any of the following:

1. Activation by tornado, storm, earthquake, or other violent condition beyond the control of the alarm user; 2. False alarms activated by disruption or disturbance of the telephone or public utility facilities; 3. Utility pole accidents; 4. Testing of the alarm system after prior notification has been received by the Sheriff's Office; 5. Intentional and non-malicious activation of an alarm or emergency response system due to a real or perceived need for police assistance, regardless of whether assistance was actually necessary.

(5) HOW IS THE 12 MONTH PERIOD CALCULATED FOR COUNTING FALSE ALARMS?

A. The counting of alarms is based on the calendar year beginning January 1st of each year.

(6) MY ALARM SYSTEM WAS ACTIVATED DUE TO A SYSTEM MALFUNCTION, BUT I GOT IT REPAIRED. DO I STILL HAVE TO PAY A FINE?

A. The Alarm Compliance Officer may waive the false alarm fee under the following circumstances:

1. If prior to submittal of the waiver request, corrective measures to repair an alarm system malfunction causing the false alarm have been initiated, provided the alarm system owner or lessee presents documentation that repair service to correct the malfunction has been performed by an alarm system

contractor licensed under the provisions of the private security guard act of 1968, Public Act No. 330 of 1968 (MCL 338.1051 et seq.), as amended or; 2. If in the discretion of the Alarm Compliance Officer cause is shown that the false alarm was attributable to extenuating circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the alarm system owner or lessee and did not result from neglect, disrepair, lack of maintenance or improper installation. It is important to remember however that no more than two (2) false alarms per calendar year shall be waived due to malfunction, maintenance, equipment failure, or user error.

(7) WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH A FALSE ALARM DETERMINATION? WHO CAN I CONTACT?

A. Alarm users who are notified that their request to waive a false alarm fee or other fee is denied may appeal the decision by submitting a written notice of appeal to the Alarm Compliance Officer within 10 business days of the denial. An Alarm Appeal Panel made up of one representative appointed by City Council, one representative appointed by the Mayor and one representative from the Sheriff's Office shall review the Alarm Compliance Officer's denial, the alarm user's report and/or meet with the alarm user and issue a written determination as to whether or not the false alarm record will be voided.

(8) WHAT IF I DON'T PAY A FALSE ALARM INVOICE

A. Individuals and businesses will have 30 days to pay an invoice generated as the result of a false alarm. Invoices not paid within 30 days are subject to additional late fees. Invoices not paid within 90 days, including any late fees or penalties will become a lien against the premises which shall be collected and enforced in the same manner with the same interest and penalties as general property taxes. An additional \$20.00 fee shall be added and certified to the tax assessing officer for collection.

(9) THE REGISTRATION FORM ASKS FOR A SIDWELL NUMBER. WHAT IS IT AND WHERE CAN I FIND IT?

A. The sidwell number is a unique number assigned to each business or residence, which designates the county, city/township/and parcel. The sidwell or parcel ID number can be found on your property tax statement or by accessing the City of Rochester Hills Web site Look under "City Services" for the Assessing Department and click on "Property Tax Look-up" After entering your address the Parcel ID Number will be provided.

(10) I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS THIS ORDINANCE FURTHER. WHO CAN I CALL?

A. The Alarm Compliance Officer is Deputy Mark Merritt. He can be reached through the Oakland County Sheriff's Office-Rochester Hills Substation Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM-4:00 PM at (248) 537-3558.

A complete copy of the False Alarm Ordinance is available at the [City Of Rochester Hills Website](#). Alarm Registration Forms are available in (Adobe *PDF* format) and can be accessed using the following link:

[Alarm Application](#)