AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARMS

Effective:	October 8, 2021
Scheduled Review:	October 8, 2024
Approved:	Fire Chief Mike Kennedy

I. PURPOSE

Response to false automatic fire alarms creates risk by having fire apparatus needlessly respond emergency traffic and depletes available fire resources. In accordance with City ordinance, the Ann Arbor Fire Department will pursue cost recovery for false automatic fire alarm. The rational of charging for false alarm response is to encourage property owners to repair their fire alarm systems.

II. ALARM REGISTRATION AND FEES

Chapter 93, Section 7:403 of the Ann Arbor Code of Ordinances allows for the billing of false alarms. Fire department response to false automatic fire alarms is assessed a $250 fine. First alarms are not free. All responses fitting the criteria are invoiced.

III. RESPONSE

A fire apparatus shall respond to all dispatched fire alarms, and a National Fire Incident Report System (NFIRS) report shall be completed. All automatic fire alarms shall be investigated to determine the reason for alarm transmission, verify no hazard exists at the occupancy, and verify the reset and operational condition of the fire alarm system. If a cancellation is received after the apparatus has called responding, the fire apparatus shall respond "normal traffic." If there is an impairment to the alarm system, please reference SOP 4.02 Fire Watch.

IV. DOCUMENTATION

The NFIRS classification is part of the determination on whether an invoice is issued. The NFIRS incident type code is what the incident was, not what the fire department was dispatched to. Only incidents with the following NFIRS incident type codes will be assessed the false alarm fee.

(71 series) Malicious, mischievous false alarm
(73 series) System or detector malfunction and
(74 series) Unintentional system / detector operation – no fire

The below examples are meant to provide guidance for company officers when assigning NFIRS incident type codes.

Example #1.
The fire department is dispatched for a smoke detector activation. Upon investigation, the fire department determines a careless cook set-off of the smoke detector. This incident should be classified as 113 - Cooking fire. This incident will not be invoiced.

Example #2.
The fire department is dispatched for a water flow detector activation. Upon investigation, the fire department determines there is no fire or sprinkler activation.

The reason for the automatic alarm transmission is unable to be determined. This incident should be classified as 735 - Alarm system activation due to malfunction. This incident will be invoiced.

Example #3.

The fire department is dispatched for a smoke detector activation. Upon investigation, the fire department determines contractors doing dry wall work set-off a smoke detector. This incident should be classified as 743 - Smoke detector activation, no fire - unintentional. This incident will be invoiced.

The narrative shall clearly state the following:

    A. What was the dispatched incident, e.g., smoke detector activation, water flow detector.
    B. What was found upon arrival.
    C. What caused the automatic alarm to activate.
    D. Actions of the fire department.
    E. Status of the automatic alarm upon fire department leaving the occupancy.
    F. Who the occupancy was left with.
    G. Who is responsible for the fire alarm system, e.g., building owner, manager, or property maintenance company.

V. REVIEW AND BILLING

A fire department employee is assigned to review all (71 series) Malicious, mischievous false alarm, (73 series) System or detector malfunction, and (74 series) Unintentional system / detector operation – no fire NFIRS reports to determine applicability of the Chapter 93, Section 7:403 of the Ann Arbor Code of Ordinances. If the incident is applicable, an invoice is sent via the City of Ann Arbor Finance Department's invoice system.