

Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District

SUPPORT SERVICES POLICY

POLICY TITLE: False Alarm Mitigation Policy

OVERSIGHT: CRRD

POLICY NUMBER: 17.001.03 EFFECTIVE DATE: 09/09/04

REVIEW DATE: 09/29/21

Background

The Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District's (District) intent is to mitigate commercial false alarm responses by determining the cause of the false alarm, and requiring the business/property owner or responsible contractor to take the necessary actions to correct the deficiency.

Purpose

To reduce the number of commercial false alarms, thereby reducing the life safety risk to the community and District employees.

Scope

This policy applies to all District employees.

Definitions

1. **NFIR:** National Fire Incident Report
2. **False Alarm:** A system generated alarm requiring the response of emergency personnel and equipment when an emergency does not exist.
3. **Responsible Contractor:** Any alarm service company, automatic fire sprinkler company, or other contractor.
4. **Problematic System:** A fire alarm system that has generated multiple responses in any given day or consecutive 2-3 day period.

Policy

1. To determine responsibility for false alarm signals, to identify and correct system deficiencies, and to document necessary information for recovery of the costs associated with multiple false alarm responses in accordance with the currently adopted District fee schedule. Note: A fine is considered an enforcement tool with the intent of mitigating false alarms.
2. Property Owners, Property Managers or their agents bear the ultimate responsibility for any and all costs/liabilities incurred as a result of a false alarm.

Procedures

1. Emergency Responder Responsibilities

- a. When an alarm is initiated by a fire detection or suppression system, and responding companies determine that it is a false alarm or an error, at least one suppression unit shall continue to the scene "Code-2" to take a report, even if a "Cancel" has been given by Dispatch.
- b. The first arriving unit is responsible to insure that sufficient information is collected to allow completion of an NFIR in the ImageTrend Database before the end of the shift. This includes the proper Incident Type from the 700 NFIRS Series and the appropriate Property Use Codes. Property Use Codes 400 and 419 are not eligible for billing.
- c. When an alarm is due to work being done by a contractor, the first arriving unit is responsible for collecting contact information of the contractor and entering it in the "Person/Entity Involved/Owner" section under the "Property" tab in ImageTrend to assist in billing of the appropriate party.

2. Community Risk Reduction Division Responsibilities

- a. The Community Risk Reduction Division will collect all false alarm data, and enter the information into a tracking database. The tracking database will be updated as new information becomes available.
- b. Once notified of any of the following, the Supervising Inspector for the location shall assign an area Inspector to investigate, and follow-up until compliance is achieved:
 - I. Alarm/System was unable to be reset
 - II. Sprinkler/Panel/Other equipment is in disrepair
 - III. Water is leaking
 - IV. Firewatch is necessary
 - V. If multiple false alarms are recorded at one specific address and is deemed a problematic system as defined above
- c. Business/Property Owners: The District's current billing contractor shall issue a warning letter notifying the business/property owner that subsequent false alarms may result in a fee. Only one (1) warning letter will be issued to a business/property owner within the specified response thresholds (see below). Included with the warning letter will be a "False Alarm Information Sheet" providing information relating to false alarms and potential fines that may result should the problem persist.
- d. Responsible Contractors: Warning letters will not be issued to "responsible contractors" or "alarm service monitoring companies" failing to notify fire dispatch. Fines will commence with the first false alarm response. If sufficient information for the contractor is unavailable, the bill will be sent to

the property owner to be passed to the contractor.

3. Fines and Bill Calculations

- a. Bills will be generated and sent to the owner/property manager and/or contractor (as described below) by the District's current billing contractor.
- b. False alarm responses are to be billed using the rates identified in the District's adopted Fee Schedule.
- c. Only one follow-up inspection will be allowed per occurrence. Additional follow-up inspections will be billed per the District's current fee schedule.

4. False Alarm Response Thresholds

- a. Owner/Property Manager:
 - I. Two (2) or more false alarm responses within any thirty (30) day period
 - II. Three (3) or more false alarm responses within any ninety (90) day period
 - III. Four (4) or more false alarm responses within any calendar year period
 - IV. For problematic systems, the owner/property manager may be required to take the system out of service and provide a twenty-four (24) hour fire watch until the deficiency has been corrected.
- b. Responsible Contractor: Shall be billed for each false alarm at a protected premise, beginning with the first response, when working on a system performing maintenance, service, testing, installation, removal, modifications, or remodel.
- c. Alarm Service Monitoring Company: Shall be billed for each false alarm from any of the company's monitored properties located within the District.

Reference

1. [Ordinance 2015-02 Amending Fire Prevention User Fee Schedules \(01/27/15\) – P:\ Board General\Ordinances\2015 Ordinances\2015-02 Plan Check and CRRD Fee Schedule.pdf](#)