



## FIRE DEPARTMENT

December 1, 2008

Owner / Property Manager  
Flower Mound

RE: Excessive False Fire Alarm Fee Ordinance

Dear Business Owner / Property Manager:

The Town of Flower Mound has initiated an Excessive False Fire Alarm Program for commercial and residential occupancies as specified in Ordinance 64-08. This program is to reduce the total number of false fire alarms due to malfunctions, lack of proper maintenance, mechanical failure, improper installation or any other response which the Fire Department personnel are unable to gain access to the premises for any reason, or are unable to determine the apparent cause of the alarm activation.

A false fire alarm is the activation of any alarm which results in the response of the Fire Department caused by the negligence or intentional misuse of a fire alarm system by the owner/occupant or employees, servants or agents, or by any other activation not caused by heat, smoke or fire, exclusive of a fire alarm malfunction. An alarm is not considered a false fire alarm if the alarm is activated due to obvious malicious causes beyond the control of the owner/occupant.

The new ordinance takes effect January 1, 2009. Businesses and other commercial property owners including schools will be allowed three false fire alarms in a calendar year without a charge. Beginning on the fourth false fire alarm, a fee of \$250.00 will be charged and shall continue until after the seventh false fire alarm where the fee will go to \$500.00 per fire alarm for the remainder of the year. Residential occupancies will be charged a fee of \$25.00 beginning on the fourth false fire alarm and continue until after the seventh false fire alarm where a fee of \$50.00 will be charged for the remainder of the year.

Another component of the excessive false fire alarm fee program is the failure to respond or refusal to respond to a property under the auspice of the property owner, business owner or tenant. Upon response by the Fire Department to the emergency "fire alarm", a building representative will be requested to respond to their property. This request will come from the responding Fire Department units and can come through the fire alarm monitoring company or fire dispatchers. The building representative shall respond to the reported fire alarm in a timely manner. The

ordinance states this response shall be less than thirty minutes and begins once the request was made. It shall be the building representative's responsibility to take charge of a building where a false fire alarm has been transmitted and ensure the problem has been corrected by a licensed technician. The fee for failure to respond or refusal to respond is \$75.00 per occurrence.

It is the goal of the Flower Mound Fire Department to reduce the number of false fire alarms. Depending on the type of alarm, there can be as many as four apparatus responding. Often, multiple fire apparatus spend a great deal of time searching for the cause of the alarm. In most instances, responders find faulty or malfunctioning systems. This includes devices that were not part of a routine maintenance program.

Responding to false fire alarms requires significant staff time and negatively affects the overall safety of the community by diverting Fire Department personnel and resources from actual emergencies. This ultimately increases response times from other assigned units responding from out of district to answer these calls for service. The purpose of this ordinance is to promote the responsible use of fire alarm systems and to provide for cost recovery of services for violations of this ordinance.

In the interest of safety for all businesses, we need to have the fire protection and monitoring systems tested annually, inspected on a regular basis and routine preventative maintenance performed as needed.

Fire alarm systems save lives and property. It is important that we keep them in a state of high readiness.

Yours truly,

Flower Mound Fire Department  
Fire Prevention Division