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GENERAL NEWS

False alarm ordinance watch**Moorestown, Pa.**

The Moorestown Township Council revealed an ordinance that would revise the existing fire code to include the growing concern of false alarms that tax the resources of its two volunteer fire districts, reported the Burlington County Times. Approximately 70 percent of all fire calls were false alarms, officials said. In the first six months of 2004 false alarms accounted for 42 percent of responses in the two volunteer fire districts.

Fines will be assessed only after a second false alarm. Currently, residential alarm fines range from \$25 to \$100, but the revised range would be between \$50 to \$400. Commercial alarm owners would face fines of \$100 to \$6,000 increasing from \$100 to \$400. The fire districts will also have the authorization to disconnect problem alarms from the township's emergency system if owners do not repair or update equipment after notices are issued.

Princeton, N.J.

A false alarm problem strikes in Princeton Borough. Last year, 38 percent of 360 fire alarms were false alarms.

The majority of false alarms are caused due to human error, weather and equipment problems. The town relies on volunteer firefighters, so false fire alarms can be even more burdensome, police said

Borough officials introduced a plan in November that seeks to restrain the high rate of false alarms. The ordinance calls for fines against owners of properties with more than two false fire alarms a year, but also includes a \$50 administrative fee for each false alarm that draws an official response. Any owner of a property with an automated fire alarm system would face a \$100 fine for each false alarm after a second one in a calendar year. The borough plans to charge an annual alarm registration fee, reported Everything Jersey.

Shreveport, La.

Shreveport police are working with the city council to update a law that regulates security systems. The alterations in the law could allow police the authority to have larger fines and penalties on owners of systems who violate the rules as well as provide guidelines on the types of systems that could be installed for monitoring.

Currently, the city law allows it to record businesses and homeowners who have four or more false alarms in a 12-month period. Police are looking at alarm laws from nearby cities and discussing how to curtail the problem, according to The Shreveport Times.

Springfield, Mass.

Springfield City Councilors, officials and alarm industry representatives drafted an ordinance aimed at reducing false alarms by imposing fines, reported The Republican.

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Council members will vote on the ordinance in early December. The ordinance is planned to take effect March 1 to give property owners time to fix defective systems. In the ordinance, false alarm is defined as an activation of a system through mechanical failure or user error.

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