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## GENERAL NEWS

### False alarm ordinance watch

#### COBOURG, Ontario

Residents are now charged a fee for owning a residential alarm each year. The alarm provider will collect the fees and then advance it to the police.

Residents will pay a \$24 registration fee, while commercial registration fees are \$60 and industrial fees are \$48. Fines have also increased for persistent false alarms. On the third false alarm recorded from the same home, a \$100 fine will be assessed, while a fourth false alarm nets a \$200 and a one-year suspension.

If residential owners refuse to pay the registration fee, police will not respond to an alarm unless it is verified as an emergency, reported the Northumberland News.

#### Exeter, R.I.

Exeter's fire chief proposed a fire alarm ordinance to the town council in an effort to decrease false fire and medical calls.

In the last year, nine false alarms came from a group home and four from a local business, reported The Standard Times.

The ordinance allows for a maximum of three false alarms in any 12 month period. But after the fourth or fifth false alarm during the year the user will be fined in the amount of \$100. However, after the sixth false alarm, every false alarm after that will be \$200. The fees will be paid to the fire department and put towards a special equipment fund.

#### HILLSBORO, Ore.

Proposed revisions to Washington County's burglar alarm ordinance would permit sheriff's deputies to not respond if more than four alarms from an address turn out to be false within a year. Under the ordinance, after the fifth false alarm the alarm permit would be revoked for one year.

Before an alarm permit is revoked, the alarm user could petition and present a written plan for preventing false alarms

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to the sheriff's office. The changes would also grant sheriff's deputies permission to force their way into a locked building or residence to shut off a loud alarm that is being a public disturbance.

The current false alarm fees will not change in the amended ordinance. The first false alarm has no penalty, the second and third has a \$25 fine, but for the fourth the sheriff adds \$103, reported The Oregonian.

### **MANSFIELD, Ohio**

Business owners and residents now will be charged \$40 instead of \$20 after the fourth false alarm per year in a decision made by the city council.

According to the city's service safety director reported the News Journal, the amended fee will be used to persuade businesses or property owners with alarms to properly train owners on how the systems work and repair malfunctioning alarms.

The fees will be issued when fire or police respond to an alarm, but owners can appeal an alarm fine if they believe they were unfairly charged. The city responds to 5,500 alarms a year.

### **TURLOCK, Calif.**

Beginning in the summer, Turlock police officers will respond to burglar alarms only with verification, if a new ordinance is passed by the city council.

The policy was prompted after a wave of false alarms - Turlock's false alarm rate is at 99 percent and reports an average of 10 false calls each day.

The policy would confirm the validity of an alarm, for example, by someone on the property or by an alarm company using audio, video or other monitoring, noted The Modesto Bee. However, the verification policy would not include robbery alarms at banks and stores, for example.

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