



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

COMMITTEE REPORT

To: Chair and Members of the Police Services Board
From: Kelly-Ann Wingate, Purchasing and Risk Analyst
Date: Wednesday, January 12, 2022
Subject: "At Fault" False Alarm Reduction Policy Report

Background:

At the November 10, 2021 Wellington County Police Services Board meeting, staff were asked to conduct a full cost analysis of how much one "At Fault" false alarm occurrence costs. With calculating two Wellington County OPP Officers time, OPP Administration Staff time, County of Wellington Staff time and supplies, the full cost recovery for one "At Fault" False Alarm would be \$385.00.

The Wellington County Police Services "At Fault" False Alarm Policy was implemented on January 1, 2002. The fees schedule for false alarms are: \$50.00 for the first, \$100.00 for the second within twelve months of the first, and \$200.00 for the third within twelve months of the first, and the fourth and subsequent alarms continue to increase by \$100.00. The fees have not been increased since the inception of the policy.

By charging the full cost recovery for "At Fault" False Alarms, this would eliminate the increase for the second and subsequent alarms. Therefore, all alarms would be charged the same amount.

Currently the policy states that "Fourth and subsequent "at fault" false alarms within a twelve month period of the first shall require a notice, including a written report from the OPP concerning the incident, to be mailed by regular mail to the alarm holder and the registered title owner of the property at least 15 days before the Board meets to determine the issue. The alarm holder or the registered title owner, or a duly appointed agent, shall be entitled to address the Board in writing or in person at the meeting. If the alarm holder or the registered title owner is unable to satisfy the Board that an "at fault" false alarm did not occur, the Board shall proceed to impose a fee in the amount of \$300.00 for the fourth "at fault" false alarm within twelve months. The fee shall increase by \$100.00 per incident for the fifth and subsequent "at fault" false alarm within twelve months of the first at fault alarm. If the alarm holder or the registered owner does not appear at the meeting, the Board may proceed in their absence."

This section would be amended to reflect the full cost recovery amount, however the invitation to the Police Services Board meeting would still apply.

Attached is the amended Appendix "A", Wellington County Police Services Board "At Fault" False Alarm Reduction Policy.

Recommendation:

That the False Alarm Policy be updated to reflect the full cost recovery of \$385.00 per false alarm; and

That the User Fees By-law be updated; and

That staff be directed to prepare the necessary By-Law; and

That the amended "At Fault" False Alarm Policy will commence on February 1, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "K. Wingate". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelly-Ann Wingate
Purchasing and Risk Analyst

APPENDIX “A”

WELLINGTON COUNTY POLICE SERVICES BOARD

“AT FAULT” FALSE ALARM REDUCTION POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

The Wellington County OPP responds to false intrusion alarms every year. It is found that most of the “At Fault” False Alarms are activated by faulty equipment or human error. The Wellington County Police Services Board and the Wellington County OPP will work toward reducing the number of “At Fault” False Alarms requiring police response by monitoring alarm locations and issuing fee invoices to the owners of premises having “At Fault” False Alarms.

APPLICATION

This policy applies to the Wellington County OPP and the County of Wellington Alarm Co-ordinator and OPP Communications Operators for the County of Wellington, commencing February 1, 2022.

AUTHORITY

Police Services Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P15, Section 10 and Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c.25, Section 391

PROCEDURE

1. Definitions

- 1.1** “Valid Alarm” is an alarm signal which has been activated for the purpose for which it was installed such as: warning of an attempted or completed criminal offence, or an emergency situation in relation to the premise in which the alarm device or system is installed.
- 1.2** “At Fault” False Alarm is any alarm signal activated unnecessarily, carelessly, improperly, or for a purpose other than that for which the alarm device or system is installed and includes:
 - 1.2.1** testing of an alarm without prior notification and approval of the officer-in-charge of the Wellington County OPP;
 - 1.2.2** an alarm reporting an attempted or completed criminal offence or an emergency situation occurring on or in relation to the premise in which the alarm device or system is installed where no evidence exists that any such event took place;
 - 1.2.3** an alarm actually or apparently activated by mechanical failure, malfunction or faulty equipment; or,

1.2.4 an alarm activated by subscriber or owner negligence or carelessness.

1.3 “No Fault” False Alarm is an alarm that prompts a police response to a premise where an emergency does not exist and the alarm was triggered by natural causes or conditions beyond the control of the alarm user including, but not limited to, an alarm actually or apparently activated by atmospheric conditions, excessive vibrations or extended power failure.

1.4 “Normal Business Hours” is the period during which any premise is open for business and includes one hour prior to opening and one hour after closing.

1.5 “Verification” occurs when an alarm company or monitoring agency establishes whether or not a police response is required by first contacting their subscriber to confirm, when possible, if the alarm is genuine.

1.6 “Approved alarm monitoring station(s) or alarm company(ies)” is one which meets the satisfaction of the Wellington County OPP Alarm Co-ordinator as being *bona fide*.

1.7 “Alarm holder” is the person or persons who is recorded with the alarm company or monitoring agency as being the owner or operator of an alarm system.

2.0 Alarm Verification

2.1 Verification is required for all intrusion alarms or alarms to automatic banking machines which occur during the normal business hours of the premise involved. The alarm monitoring station is responsible for verifying these types of alarms.

Verification may also be requested by the officer dispatched to an alarm or the Officer-In-Charge of the Wellington County OPP when;

2.1.1 an intrusion alarm is activated in a building during normal business hours or when it is reasonably expected that authorized persons are or should be in the building in question;

2.1.2 when the same alarm is activated more than once during the officer’s tour of duty and the alarm is obviously malfunctioning, or;

2.1.3 when several alarms are activated within a short period of time during an electrical storm or a power failure.

3.0 Registration

3.1 The Alarm Co-ordinator shall compile an alarm list of the alarm holders and the property owners of alarm systems which cause or have caused “At Fault” False Alarms, for statistical, policy and billing purposes.

- 3.2** Upon request, alarm companies or monitoring agencies shall provide to the Alarm Co-ordinator the name and address and other reasonable information relating to alarm holders and property owners as may be required for the purposes of this policy.

4.0 Automatic Dialing Alarms

- 4.1** Automatic Dialing Alarms causing “At Fault” False Alarms requiring response by the Wellington County OPP shall be subject to the fees set out in Section 5.0 “Fees for False Alarms”.

5.0 Fees for False Alarms

- 5.1** The alarm holder and the registered title owner of a property containing an alarm system which causes an “At Fault” False Alarm and a response or responses by the Wellington County OPP shall be jointly and severally liable to pay to the Corporation of the County of Wellington the following fees:

- 5.1.1** \$385 for the first, second and third alarm within twelve months of the first; and,

- 5.2** Fourth and subsequent “at fault” false alarms within a twelve month period of the first shall require a notice, including a written report from the OPP concerning the incident, to be mailed by regular mail to the alarm holder and the registered title owner of the property at least 15 days before the Board meets to determine the issue. The alarm holder or the registered title owner, or a duly appointed agent, shall be entitled to address the Board in writing or in person at the meeting. If the alarm holder or the registered title owner is unable to satisfy the Board that an “at fault” false alarm did not occur, the Board shall proceed to impose a fee in the amount of \$385.00 for the fourth “at fault” false alarm within twelve months. If the alarm holder or the registered owner does not appear at the meeting, the Board may proceed in their absence.

- 5.3** Twelve months from the time of an alarm system’s first “At Fault” False Alarm, the Alarm Co-ordinator shall revise the alarm list created under subsection 3.1, so that the fee schedule of subsection 5.1 applies as though there had been no previous “At Fault” False Alarms.

- 5.4** In the case of chronic “At Fault” False Alarm system owners, ie. those incurring four or more responses within a twelve month period, the Board may direct the Alarm Co-ordinator not to apply the terms of subsection 5.3, and to continue to record the number of “At Fault” False Alarm responses in the alarm list.

- 5.5** When chronic “At Fault” False Alarm system owners have a period of twelve consecutive months without requiring police response, the Alarm Co-ordinator will advise the Board, and apply the terms of subsection 5.3.

6.0 Appeal Procedure

6.1 Alarm holders may appeal in writing only to the Alarm Co-ordinator for a written decision waiving a fee if:

- 6.1.1** the alarm holder can satisfy the attending OPP officers that the system was malfunctioning during the false alarm attended by them;
- 6.1.2** the alarm holder can satisfy the Alarm Co-ordinator that the system was malfunctioning during one or more of the false alarms attended by the police, and;
- 6.1.3** the alarm holder can demonstrate in writing signed by an approved alarm monitoring station or alarm company that significant corrective action was taken to repair or replace a faulty or inadequate alarm system.

6.2 An appeal by an alarm holder or the registered title owner of a property containing an alarm system, or the Wellington County OPP from a decision of the Alarm Co-ordinator lies to the Wellington County Police Services Board (the Board). The appeal may be in writing or in person at a regularly scheduled Board meeting, provided the appeal is commenced by notice, in writing, within 30 days of the decision of the Alarm Co-ordinator. The decision of the Board shall be final.

7.0 Collection as Taxes

7.1 Fees not paid from which no appeal has been commenced within the applicable time shall be added to the tax roll in accordance with the terms of Section 398 of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c.25.

8.0 Public Notice

8.1 Annually, and more frequently if required by the Board, the Alarm Co-ordinator will ensure a public notice of Board By-law 5737-22 and the terms of the "At Fault" False Alarm Reduction Policy. The public notice may take the form of newspaper advertising, or web-site posting, or tax bill inserts, or any combination of the three.