Alarm Reduction Proposal

Why is the Police Department suggesting a charge for false burglar alarms?

Over a two year study period, the police department responded to 594 false burglar alarms consuming 432 hours of manpower, (Police Officers and Communications Personnel), equating a cost of approximately $9,000.

After studying data between commercial alarms and residential alarms, the police department found that the problem exists primarily with commercial properties that have repeat false alarms calls, in some cases as many as four in one day. During the period of our study there were 571 commercial alarms resulting in only two valid calls. By contrast we had only 23 residential calls with no criminal activity.

Is there a fee for Registration?

No, there will be no fee to register your alarm system with the Town, only fines for excessive alarms (over 4) for registered alarm users and fines for alarms at non registered businesses.

Will the Police Department work with the property owners and businesses to explain the new system?

Yes. As part of the new ordinance, each business would be asked to register their alarm system with the Town of Christiansburg. This is an annual registration that will include a packet of information with: confirmation of registration, the fee schedule, and places to direct questions and concerns, and opportunities for additional education.

Registration will be an annual renewal filed at the Town offices with the Treasurer/Finance Office along with your business license by March 1st of each year. Each registrant would be required to update the information for responsible persons if changes occur during the year as well as updating at each renewal period. Businesses are encouraged to update responsible persons with the Police Department Treasurer/Finance office when changes occur throughout the year.

Will these fees increase revenues for the future?

The intent of the program or ordinance is to reduce the number of false alarms, not to increase revenue. However, because of the possible charges for excessive alarms the town will see revenue generated.

* All registered businesses will receive four (4) false alarm responses
* Charges for registered businesses are assessed as follows for false alarm responses as follows:
    $50.00-Fifth
    $100.00-Sixth
    $150.00-Seventh and Subsequent Alarms for the remainder of the fiscal year

*All unregistered businesses will be assessed as follows for false alarm responses:
    $100 for each false alarm

Why would there be fines for commercial properties and not residential responses?

The fines are based on cost recovery for police services. In the case of commercial properties, typically more than one officer, and as many as three will respond and can wait up to an hour for a responsible party to arrive to check the business. For residential calls, two officers are typically dispatched. As a result, the cost to the police department to respond to commercial calls is higher than residential calls.

Are businesses granted their four (4) "free" false alarms every calendar year or are they cumulative?

The number of false alarm calls will only be counted in a 12 month period for the time the property owner has their alarm registered. Each property owner will receive four (4) free false alarm calls for every 12 month registration period before they are charged. At the time they renew their business license they will be asked to update their pertinent information.