Response to False Alarms

438.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines to assist members of the Fargo Police Department in their response to incidents involving false alarms. In an effort to reduce calls for service to false alarms, the Fargo Police Department shall use the following process to assist the City of Fargo in billing property owners for excessive false alarms.

438.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Fargo Police Department to respond to and investigate all alarm calls that are dispatched. Property owners who have a police alarm system which signals excessive alarms shall pay a service charge to the City of Fargo.

438.3 DEFINITIONS

False Alarm - The activation of an alarm system not related to an actual emergency, criminal activity, or weather-related incident.

Alarm Period - The period between January 1st through December 31st of the calendar year.

438.4 RESPONSE TO FALSE ALARMS

When responding to a false alarm call, officers shall ensure that the following information is entered into the call for service in their Mobile Data Computer (MDC) to include:

(a) The address of the alarm and the business name, if relevant. If there is more than one business or tenant at the same address, the officer should include the name of specific establishment where the alarm occurred.

(b) If an officer makes contact with a key holder, either in-person or by phone, the officer should enter the name, date of birth, official title/position, and a phone number for the individual in the comments of the run.

(c) The officer shall Identify an appropriate disposition for the alarm:

1. **HE –** Human Error: The individual responsible should be identified in the comments of the run.
2. **ME –** Mechanical Error: The officer should specify the nature of the error in the comments of the run.
3. **NKH –** No Key Holder: This category should be used if no key holder can be identified or a key holder does not respond to the scene. The officer should document any attempts to contact a key holder in the comments of the run.
4. **NAT –** Weather Related: The officer should specify the weather conditions in the comments of the run.

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5. **CAN –** Dispatched Canceled: This category should be used only when officers are canceled prior to arriving on the scene of the alarm. These calls are not billable and do not count against the alarm owner.

The disposition of Action Complete (AC) shall not be used for alarm calls. If the alarm is found to be the result of an unlawful act and/or an unauthorized entry, the reporting officer shall notify dispatch to change the incident type in New World to the appropriate title (i.e. Burglary, Vandalism, Trespassing, Robbery, etc.) and should clear the call with Report – ICR.

438.5 BODY WORN CAMERA USAGE

Officers shall activate their body-worn camera in accordance with the Body-Worn Camera Policy (437) and shall utilize the "False Alarm" category in Axon Evidence when categorizing videos related to the alarm call unless another category is more applicable.

438.6 FEES

As allowed in Fargo city ordinance 25-30, any alarm user who owns or maintains an alarm system that signals three (3) or more false alarms in an alarm period as defined herein, shall pay a fee to the city of Fargo as follows:

(a) Four (4) incidents but no more than 6 incidents - $100 per alarm.

(b) Seven (7) incidents but no more than 9 incidents - $150/alarm.

(c) Ten (10) or more incidents - $200/alarm.

Alarm fees shall be cumulative and due immediately upon receipt of billing notice. Interest shall accrue at a rate of 1½% per month on all invoices 30 days' past due, until paid in full.

The Chief of Police may suspend police response to alarms without secondary verification, excluding panic and robbery alarms, in the event the alarm user exceeds ten (10) false alarms in the alarm period. The Chief of Police or designee shall provide written notice mailed by first class mail to the alarm user's last known address advising of the decision to suspend police response under these circumstances.

The invoices and notice letters are prepared by the Department's Payroll & Procurement Assistant. All payments are received and tracked by the City of Fargo Finance Office. Warning notices may be sent out to businesses or individuals with excessive false alarms on a quarterly basis. Warning notices and contested fines will be handled by the Fargo Police Department's Payroll and Procurement Assistant and Records Office Manager.

438.7 INITIAL ISSUANCE DATE 3/24/2026

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