TOLEDO FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

C-34 False Alarms - System Malfunctions

Emergency Manual

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Policy/Procedure

By ordinance, the Toledo Fire and Rescue Department may bill an owner or occupant of a structure who does not maintain an alarm system properly and subsequently causes repetitive false alarms to be sent. The following criteria shall be used to determine whether a bill will be issued.

Note: The NFIRS form must specify the incident was a false or unnecessary run.

1. The TFRD will bill for the following:

1. Response to an incident at which there was no smoke or fire found upon arrival nor was there any reported trace of smoke or fire present when the alarm was sent. There should be no visible, legitimate reason for the system to have been activated.

2. A fire drill conducted with no prior notification to the TFRD Dispatch Center, during which activation of the alarm system causes an unnecessary Department response.

3. Maintenance work, construction work, or repair work that causes an unnecessary alarm and subsequent Departmental response, with no prior or subsequent notification to the TFRD Dispatch Center, or the 9-1-1 Dispatch Center.

4. Documented malicious false alarms resulting in Departmental responses. Documentation must include contact information for witnesses willing to provide testimony regarding the perpetrator of the false alarm.

2. The TFRD will not send a bill when the following explanations are found on an NFIRS form:

1. That cooking operations caused the alarm. It shall be assumed there was a degree of smoke, however slight, and the alarm device operated as designed.

2. The incident constituted a smoke scare. If there was an honest intent to call for help or if the occupants believed they were in danger, the incident shall be deemed legitimate.
    - Note: If fire personnel note that it is the same occupant who repeatedly calls for help, who has been counseled, and continues to call for help unnecessarily, TFRD may begin billing for future responses to that address. The TFRD Fire Prevention Bureau, upon being made aware of the incident(s) shall put the owner on notice and shall bill for subsequent unnecessary runs. This may occur after the third occurrence.
3. A fire drill for which prior notification was made to the appropriate office or to TFRD Dispatch personnel.
4. The false alarm ordinance is not violated in cases of disruption to utility services to include telephone, gas, and electrical power. It is also not violated in cases in which high winds activate an alarm. This information shall be noted on the NFIRS form.
5. If a water flow alarm is activated and there is a legitimate reason for the water to be flowing, such as frozen pipes, or a broken sprinkler head, the owner or occupant shall not be billed.
6. If information documented by Command is incomplete or confusing, a bill will not be sent.

See Also:

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