



Fire Fees Bylaw



On January 1, 2004, a new Fire Fees Bylaw was introduced that brings into effect fees for select non-emergency services such as response to repeated, preventable false fire alarms.

February 2004

A Focus on Safety

The safety of Calgarians and firefighters is a priority for the Fire Department. Whenever there is an emergency requiring the Fire Department, our crews will be there to assist. Through the Fire Fees Bylaw, the Fire Department is working to educate businesses and citizens on ways to reduce non-emergency calls so crews can be available to respond to events where emergency help is truly needed.

Fire Fees Bylaw

The bylaw brings into effect fees for select non-emergency services provided by the Fire Department, including response to repeat, preventable false fire alarms.

The goal of the bylaw is to reduce the number of false alarms to which fire crews respond each year. Fewer false alarms reduce the risk to businesses, citizens and firefighters by lessening the number of responding emergency vehicles on the road and improving available response for other emergency calls.

In addition, fewer false alarms for a building or apartment mean fewer disruptions to your business and residents.

What does repeated mean?

Under the bylaw, the Fire Department will not charge for the first two responses to a preventable false alarm in a calendar year. Fees will be assessed for three or more preventable false alarms in a calendar year.

False Alarm Fees

Fees apply for false alarms within a calendar year.

First	No charge
Second	No charge
Third	\$250
Fourth	\$250
Fifth or more	\$500

The routing of security alarms to the Fire Department is prohibited and will be subject to a fee of \$500 upon a first offence and for every additional alarm.

What is considered a preventable false alarm?

The majority of false alarms can be prevented through system maintenance, modifications to the alarm system, or control of construction, maintenance and renovation of buildings.

Preventable false alarms are fire alarm systems that are activated directly or through an emergency system monitored by the fire alarm system as a result of:

- Equipment malfunction or failure;
- Improper or inadequate installation or maintenance;
- Work taking place on the fire alarm system;
- Fire drills involving activation of the fire alarm system where the Fire Department has not been notified
- Building activities such as construction, renovation, maintenance or cooking.

The safety of citizens is the primary concern of the Fire Department. If someone believes there is a fire or a fire alarm is activated, call 9-1-1 immediately. No fees will be assessed if a fire was or is in progress.

Preventing False Alarms

If your building encounters repeated false alarms for which there is no actual emergency or fire, the Fire Department encourages you to examine ways in which you can prevent future fire alarms from occurring.

- Fire alarm systems should receive regular maintenance and testing to ensure they are functioning properly.
- If you are performing building maintenance or renovations, you can shut down the fire alarm system. When the fire alarm system is shut down, or inoperative for more than two hours for any reason, you must notify the Fire Department. If directed by the Fire Department, you may need to provide continual surveillance within the building until the fire alarm system is restored to operating condition.
- Educate contractors, tenants and building staff, including operators, cleaners, and security, regarding when to take the fire system offline and subsequent safety procedures to be followed.

- When conducting Hot Works activities – any type of work using open flames or producing heat or sparks such as cutting, welding, soldering, brazing, grinding, adhesive bonding, thermal spraying and thawing pipes – it must comply with Alberta Fire Code requirements.
- Relocate fire and smoke detectors or switch the type of detector used in certain areas of your building to reduce instances of alarms triggered by activities such as cooking. For commercial buildings, businesses and multi-family dwellings, contact a fire inspector at (403) 268-CITY before moving or switching detector types.
- Monitor the use of portable cooking devices such as toasters, toaster ovens, and microwaves.
- If you are a property owner or manager, consider the inclusion of a clause in tenant and contractor contracts to make these parties responsible for any fees for alarms they may cause.

Rebate Program

Individuals assessed fees for false fire alarms may apply to the Fire Department within the calendar year for reimbursement up to a maximum of 50 per cent of the fees paid. Reimbursement will be provided if you can provide documentation of repair costs associated with an active effort to improve system performance to reduce the likelihood of future false alarms.



Common Questions

Who will be charged the fee if three or more preventable false alarms occur in the same building in a calendar year?

The fee may be charged to the property owner, business owner, alarm company, property manager or person responsible for the false alarm.

I am responsible for a facility that has more than one building on the site. How does the bylaw apply in this situation?

The Fire Department may charge a fee for responding to three or more preventable false alarms on the same parcel of land within a calendar year where there is more than one building on that parcel of land.

Will someone from the Fire Department come to my building to review the facility and identify ways we can prevent false alarms?

Yes. A fire inspector will visit your facility to advise you on false alarm prevention activities. Please contact (403) 268-CITY for an inspector in your area.

For More Information

For additional information related to the bylaw, false alarm fees, or the rebate program, please contact (403) 268-8742.

To see a complete copy of the Fire Fees Bylaw or learn more about false alarm prevention, visit www.calgary.ca/fire/falsealarms for more information.