



# POLICE DEPARTMENT

*Timothy J. Roets, Chief of Police*

Each year officers of the Watertown Police Department respond to literally hundreds of false burglary and robbery alarms. Each of these alarms must be handled as a crime in progress until it can be determined otherwise by the responding officers. Since it is necessary that at least two officers be sent to each alarm, you can imagine how false alarms drain our resources.

The City of Watertown enacted a False Alarm ordinance (9.19), which became effective July 1, 1997. Essentially, the ordinance allows for two unintentional false alarms. Beginning with the third, however, a response fee is charged to the alarm user. False alarms received are based on a twelve month period of time. The alarm ordinance was amended and later adopted in January 2015 showing the response fees. The ordinance reflects that upon receiving a third and subsequent false alarm all within a twelve month time period, a \$90.00 fee will be charged for each alarm.

Please read the attached alarm ordinance which includes that you must register the alarm with the City of Watertown for a one-time \$15.00 fee. Also complete the key holder list, which is attached, and return it to the Watertown Police Department. This stays on file with the police department only in case your alarm is activated and we need to get in contact with persons with the capability of entering the residence or silencing the alarm.

Any questions regarding this matter should be addressed to the Crime Prevention Unit of the Watertown Police Department, 206-4210.

Sincerely,

Timothy J. Roets  
Chief of Police

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stacy Schroeder".

Officer Stacy Schroeder  
Crime Prevention Officer

**(9) REVOCATION.** A taxicab license may be revoked by the Council for a violation of this Chapter, any provision of Chs. 340 to 348, Wis. Stats., the City traffic ordinances or for any offense affecting the safety and welfare of passengers. The Licensing Committee shall investigate any charges made against a licensee, conduct a hearing on such charges with notice to the licensee, and if the License Committee recommends revocation of the license, such revocation shall be recommended to the Council. At the time the revocation is being considered by the Council, the licensee will have the opportunity to be heard and to present evidence to the Council. (Rep. and Recr. #75-8)

**9.18 SPECIAL EVENTS LICENSE.** The purpose of this license is to require review and approval of any outside public event that, because of noise, or potential to attract a crowd, may affect the health, safety or public welfare of a neighborhood or the City as a whole. A public event is one that is open to the general public to attend. Any person planning to hold the event on either public or private property which may affect the public welfare or anyone applying for a picnic license pursuant to Section 9.01 is required to obtain a Special Events License specifying the location, permitted hours of operation, authorized activities, or any other limitation deemed appropriate. The Licensing Board will review the initial application and make a recommendation to the Common Council at its next appropriate meeting. The cost of this special license shall be computed based upon an amount equal to the rate paid per hour to the police/auxiliary officers as approved by the contract/payroll resolution, times the number of hours worked, times the number of personnel furnished. In no event will this person, club, corporation or organization be charged for more than three (3) officers, even though more than three (3) officers may be assigned to a particular event. This special events license is not required if there are other licenses already authorized to cover this particular event. A recommendation specifying the number of police/auxiliary officers, if any, which will be required at this event will be made by the Licensing Board and approved by the Common Council. (Rep.& Recr. #85-17; Rep.& Recr. #98-16)

**9.19 REGULATION OF ALARM SYSTEMS.** (Cr. #74-59; Am. #97-38; Am.#98-2; Rep.& Recr.#98-62)

**1. DEFINITIONS.**

**(a) Audible Alarm Device** means any alarm device which produces an audible signal at the premises where it is installed, whether by means of horns, bells, sirens, or other mechanisms, thereby notifying persons within audible range of the signal that police should be notified. (Smoke detectors or fire detectors located in individual residences or businesses are expressly excluded from this category of audible alarm device).

**(b) Alarm System** means an intrusion, burglar, hold-up or similar system which is designed to summon or cause a response by the Police Department, or that gives a signal, either visual, audible or both, on the exterior portion of the property, but does not leave that structure by wire, radio waves, or other transmission to a control receiving location.

**(c) Central Alarm Station** means any facility that is manned at all times by trained operators employed to receive, record, and validate alarm signals and to relay information about validated signals to the police radio dispatch center when appropriate.

**(d) Alarm Device** means any alarm device or system which transmits its alarm signal from the location of the alarm to the police radio dispatch center, other police dispatch facility, or central station by any means except a direct dial alarm device as defined in this section.

**(e) False Alarm** means any alarm signal originating from an alarm device, alarm system or audible alarm device to which the police respond and which results from:

(1) **False Activation**, including reporting a robbery where no actual or attempted robbery has occurred, or reporting a burglar alarm where there is no evidence to substantiate an attempted or forced entry to the premises;

(2) **Alarm malfunction**, including mechanical failure or electrical failure;

(3) **Alarm triggered by negligence**, including overly-sensitive settings.

(f) Alarm User means the person, partnership, corporation or other entity of any kind that owns or is in control of any building, structure or facility or portion thereof, wherein an alarm system is in operation.

(g) Direct Dial Alarm Device means any device which, when activated, transmits a prerecorded message or other signal by telephone, directly to the police radio dispatch center, requesting a police or fire response.

## 2. PERMIT APPLICATION AND STANDARDS

(a) No person shall install, cause, continue, maintain or permit to exist any alarm device within the City of Watertown without first completing an application supplied by the Clerk/Treasurer's office accompanied by a fifteen dollar (\$15.00) permit fee.

(b) The alarm permit application shall include the following information:

(1) The name, address, and telephone number of the alarm user.

(2) The name, address, and telephone number of a person or firm which can be contacted in the event of an emergency or false alarm and is available upon request of the police department within one-half hour of notification of such emergency or false alarm to provide a key to the premises for which the alarm has been activated for the purpose of inspecting the premises or resetting the alarm system.

(3) Identification of the alarm company.

(4) Any other information deemed necessary by the Chief of Police for the purpose of providing an appropriate response by the Police Department.

(5) Notice of liability for the response fee set forth in Section 9.19(4)(c) and notice that the response fee may be placed as a special charge on the alarm user's tax roll pursuant to sec. 66.60 (16), Wis. Stats., if not paid.

(6) Notice that, in the event that the Police Department responds to an alarm at the premises covered by the alarm system, and neither the permit holder nor an authorized agent is present, the permit holder consents to the entry into the premises, if necessary, to ascertain the cause of the alarm.

**3. ALARM REQUIREMENTS (Am.#02-57) (Rep. & Am. #15-6)**

(a) No person shall install, or cause, continue, maintain or permit the operation of a Direct Dial Alarm Device, except:

(1) Direct dial alarm devices used by the physically handicapped.

(2) Direct dial alarm devices used by departments and divisions of the City of Watertown.

(b) In the event any alarm or warning signal is audible to others not on the premises where the audible alarm device is maintained, the alarm user shall terminate, or cause the audible alarm to be terminated, no later than thirty (30) minutes after the activation of said audible signal.

(c) Upon installation of a new alarm system, the alarm user will be given a thirty (30) day grace period, during which time no response fees will be imposed. This grace period allows for proper installation and necessary adjustments of said alarm system.

**4. FALSE ALARMS**

(a) No person owning, using or possessing an alarm system shall cause or permit the activation of a false alarm.

(b) No person shall intentionally cause the activation of an alarm system, knowing that no emergency exists.

(c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the discretion of the Police Department to take into account mitigating circumstances in enforcing this ordinance.

(d) Response Fees for False Alarms (Am.#02-57) (Rep. & Am. #15-6)

(1) In the instance of a first false alarm response within any twelve (12) month period, the City of Watertown Police Department shall cause to be issued a warning setting forth description of the violation of this Section with a copy of the ordinance to the owner as well as any occupant, lessee or legal possessor of the address summoning a response.

(2) In the instance of any second false alarm response within any twelve (12) month period, the City of Watertown Police Department shall cause to be issued a final warning setting forth description of the violation of this section with a copy of the ordinance to the owner as well as any occupant, lessee or legal possessor of the address summoning a response.

(3) In the instance of any third or subsequent false alarm response within any twelve (12) month period, the City of Watertown Police Department shall cause to be issued an Alarm User due and payable invoice for response costs in the minimum sum of ninety dollars (\$90.00), the date payment is due, the right of the Alarm User to a hearing before the Chief of Police if a request therefore is made before the date payment is due and a warning that any unpaid response fee will be allocated to the Alarm User's property tax roll as a special charge pursuant to Sec. 66.60(16) Wis. Stats. at the Alarm User's last known address with copy to the owner, at the owner's last known address as well as any occupant, lessee or legal possessor of the address summoning a response. The City of Watertown Police Department shall collect such additional amounts at the same rate in fifteen minute increments if the time expended by the Police Department exceeds one-half hour (1/2).

(e) Periodic alarm testing will not result in a response fee, as long as prior notification with the Police Department was made, along with notification once the testing is completed.

(f) Storm-related false alarms which can be reasonably verified shall be exempt from any response fees.

**5. COLLECTION OF FEES** (Rep. & Am. #15-6)

(a) For the purposes of this section, an alarm user who is lessee, occupant, or tenant of the premises from which the false alarm originated shall be deemed agent of the owner thereof.

(b) All charges for response fees are due and payable to the City of Watertown within thirty (30) days of mailing of the notice required in subsection (b), except, if a hearing is requested in a timely manner, the assessment is due within ten (10) days after an adverse decision is rendered at such hearing.