



Watertown
Police Department

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Robert Kaminski, 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 Chapter 216, which became effective October 2016. 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 ordinance reflects that for each false alarm there will be a \$90.00 fee upon receiving a third false alarm and subsequent false alarms all within a twelve month time period.

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,

Robert Kaminski
Chief of Police

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacy Schroeder".

Officer Stacy Schroeder
Crime Prevention Officer

§ 216-1. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

ALARM DEVICE — 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.

ALARM SYSTEM — An intrusion, burglar, holdup 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.

ALARM USER — 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.

AUDIBLE ALARM DEVICE — 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.)

CENTRAL ALARM STATION — 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.

DIRECT DIAL ALARM DEVICE — 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.

FALSE ALARM — Any alarm signal originating from an alarm device, alarm system or audible alarm device to which the police respond and which results from:

- A. 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.
- B. Alarm malfunction, including mechanical failure or electrical failure.

- C. Alarm triggered by negligence, including overly sensitive settings.

§ 216-2. 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 permit fee as set by the Common Council and provided under separate fee schedule.¹
- 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 1/2 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 § 216-4D and notice that the response fee may be placed as a special charge on the alarm user's tax roll pursuant to § 66.0627, 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.

§ 216-3. Alarm requirements. [Amended by Ord. No. 02-57; 4-6-2015 by Ord. No. 15-6]

- A. No person shall install or cause, continue, maintain or permit the operation of a direct dial alarm device, except:

1. Editor's Note: Amended at time of adoption of Code (see Ch. 1, General Provisions, Art. II).

- (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 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-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.

§ 216-4. 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 chapter.
- D. Response fees for false alarms. **[Amended by Ord. No. 02-57; 4-6-2015 by Ord. No. 15-6]**
 - (1) In the instance of a first false alarm response within any twelve-month period, the City of Watertown Police Department shall cause to be issued a warning, setting forth a 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-month period, the City of Watertown Police Department shall cause to be issued a final warning, setting forth a 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-month period, the City of Watertown Police Department shall cause to be issued to an

alarm user a due and payable invoice for response costs in the minimum sum as set by the Common Council and provided under separate fee schedule, the date payment is due, the right of the alarm user to a hearing before the Chief of Police if a request therefor 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 § 66.0627, 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.²

- E. Periodic alarm testing will not result in a response fee, as long as prior notification to 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.

§ 216-5. Collection of fees.

- 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.³
- B. All charges for response fees are due and payable to the City of Watertown within 30 days of mailing of the notice required in Subsection B, except that, if a hearing is requested in a timely manner, the assessment is due within 10 days after an adverse decision is rendered at such hearing.

§ 216-6. Violations and penalties.

Any person who shall violate any provision of this chapter shall be subject to a penalty as provided in § 1-4 of this Code. Each violation and each day a violation continues or occurs shall constitute a separate offense. This action shall not preclude the City from

2. Editor's Note: Amended at time of adoption of Code (see Ch. 1, General Provisions, Art. II).

3. Editor's Note: Original Section 9.19 5(b), pertaining to invoices and notices, which immediately followed this subsection, was repealed 4-6-2015 by Ord. No. 15-6 and subsequent subsection renumbered accordingly.

maintaining any appropriate action to prevent or remove a violation of this chapter.