



## District of Central Saanich

### Fire Prevention & False Alarm Bylaws

#### Frequently Asked Questions for Business Owners and owners of Fire Alarm Systems

The District's False Alarm Bylaw aims to reduce the number of false alarms that require fire response. Properties with multiple annual false alarms use significant time from emergency responders that should be directed to higher priority needs. The Bylaw sets out a graduated fee structure for false alarms.

#### 1. How do the new bylaws affect my property?

The new bylaws set updated requirements for fire prevention, life safety, and fire alarm systems for all business properties. They clarify your responsibilities for maintaining safe premises, fire protection equipment, and alarm systems, and introduce new penalties for non-compliance and repeated false alarms.

#### 2. What are my main responsibilities as a property owner?

- Remove fire hazards and keep your property free of debris and flammable materials.
- Maintain and test all fire protection equipment (alarms, sprinklers, extinguishers) at least annually.
- Ensure smoke alarms are installed and maintained as per the BC Fire Code.
- Provide and maintain clear access to fire hydrants and fire department connections.
- For commercial kitchens, ensure regular cleaning and maintenance of exhaust systems.
- Install a lock box for fire department access if required.
- Ensure proper installation, maintenance, and operation of fire alarm systems.
- Notify the Fire Department in writing within 72 hours of installing a new alarm system or changing monitoring contacts.
- Provide up-to-date contact information for monitoring services or property references.

#### 3. What happens if my fire alarm system causes false alarms?

- After three false alarms in a 12-month period, you will receive a warning notice.
- For the fourth and each subsequent false alarm, a \$200 fee per incident will be charged.
- Additional fees may apply if property contacts do not attend within 30 minutes or if forced entry is required.
- Unpaid fees may be added to your property taxes as taxes in arrears.

#### **4. What are the penalties for not complying with the bylaws?**

- Fines can be up to \$50,000 per offence, with each day of non-compliance considered a separate offence.
- A minimum fine of \$150 may apply for false alarms.
- The Fire Department may recover costs for securing premises or providing fire watch services.

#### **5. How will I be notified if I am in violation?**

- The Fire Chief may issue written orders or notices for non-compliance or fire hazards.
- Orders can be delivered in person, by mail, or posted on the property.
- You have the right to appeal a false alarm determination within 10 days of notification.

#### **6. Where can I get more information or appeal a decision?**

- Contact the Central Saanich Fire Department for guidance, to update your contact information, or to appeal a false alarm determination.
- Written appeals must be submitted to the Fire Chief within 10 days of notification.

Stay compliant, stay safe!

For questions, contact the Central Saanich Fire Department.