



SOUTH BURLINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT



January 18, 2007

Dear Homeowner/Business Owner/Tenant,

This letter serves to inform you about a newly revised ordinance that was adopted by the City Council pertaining to Security Alarms throughout the city. Although the City had a previous ordinance in place, no measures were ever put in place to manage the process of registration, billing, and overall accountability. The foundation of this new ordinance was brought about by the police department after reviewing numerous years of data concerning the response to thousands of alarm activations in the community. The management within the police department has determined that over 95% of activated alarms are false and could have been avoided. Additionally, continued response to false alarms by officers is causing an inordinate amount of wasted resources and affects the overall safety of our officers and community.

This letter is designed to notify you about the new ordinance, the process for registration of alarms, our policy in responding to all alarms, and the potential impacts to our alarm registrants in the event that excessive alarm activations occur.

The new ordinance has been placed on the Police Departments Website at www.sbpdvt.org. The ordinance was signed, voted on and accepted by the City Council after public hearings were conducted on October 16, 2006, but will not fully go into affect until April 1, 2007, the beginning of the registration year.

According to the ordinance, all owners/tenants who have alarms installed on their premises are required to register with the South Burlington Police Department. The registration period is April 1 thru March 31 each year and the alarm registration must be renewed each year. The cost for registration is \$45 for the initial registration and \$30 for all subsequent renewals. Those employing alarms who fail to register or renew their registration are subject to municipal violation tickets being issued.

We cannot express enough about the importance of updated information being provided to the police department. Because of this, alarm registrants are responsible for maintaining up to date contact information for those responsible for the premises in the event an alarm is activated, both during business and non-business hours. Failure to keep this information up to date may also be subject to municipal tickets being issued.

Owners of property who rent/lease to others who have alarms installed must complete an owner's authorization form assigning full responsibility to their tenants for alarm maintenance and activations. Owners of property must provide the tenant a copy of this form assigning full responsibility to the tenant.

As with the previous ordinance, externally installed audible alarms are prohibited and any internal audible alarm must be equipped to automatically silence in 10 minutes or less. Additionally, no

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Trevor S. Whipple, Chief

alarm may be installed in a building that has an automatic dialer to the police department unless written permission is received from the Chief of Police or his/her designee.

Due to large volume of false alarms that are responded to by police officers we have had to include in the ordinance measures to charge administrative fees for more than 2 false alarms responded to in a registration year. Fines range from \$30 per false alarm for 3-5 false alarms responses up to \$100 per false alarm for 9 or more responses. Owners/employees/residents that realize a false alarm has been activated are required to contact the police department immediately. Notification to the police department prior to the arrival of police personnel will not be considered a false alarm unless there are reasons to believe the notification is suspicious and an officer must continue to respond. Owners/Tenants are obligated by ordinance to pay these administrative fees according to the ordinance; however, failure to pay these fees can be cause for municipal violation tickets being issued and the possibility for the discontinuation of response services by the police department to any alarm activations.

Fines imposed upon alarm owners for false alarms are designed to encourage owners to take measures to prevent these false activations. Owners failing to take reasonable measures to prevent these activations from occurring are also subject to municipal ordinance violation tickets. It will be the discretion of the police department to determine when an owner/tenant will be issued a violation ticket, but these may be issued in addition to the administrative fees anytime after the first 2 false alarms.

The police department has the right to discontinue responding to repeated false alarms when it is determined that the responses are detrimental to officer's safety. The decision to discontinue response will be considered any time the total alarms responded to exceeds 6 in a registration period. Owners/Tenants will be notified in writing at least 10 days prior to the actual discontinuation of response services.

The South Burlington Police Department is committed to providing the highest quality service to our community. We realize the importance of business owners and home owners trying to protect their possessions, but must balance this with the resources available and the safety/security of its employees and the community in general. Our employees are committed to answering calls for alarm activations and will go above and beyond to assist alarm registrants with information that will help prevent false alarms from occurring.

This letter will serve as our notification to all know alarm owners about the newly adopted ordinance and as a call for you to register your alarm with our department as soon as possible prior to March 31st, 2007. Forms are available by calling our office at (802) 846-4165 or by visiting our website at www.sbpdvt.org.

Please feel free to contact the police department with any questions you may have regarding the new Security Alarms Ordinance. We would like to wish you a safe and successful year ahead and would like to express our thanks to you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,



Captain Todd C. Shepard
Executive Officer