



Corporate NO: R178

Report COUNCIL DATE: July 23, 2001

REGULAR			
TO:	Mayor & Council	DATE:	July 19, 2001
FROM:	City Solicitor	FILE:	0023-14452 0023-13168
SUBJECT:	Amendments to Surrey Security and Fire Alarm By-law, 1997, No. 13168 (the "By-law")		

RECOMMENDATION

1. Council consider the information provided in this report.
2. Council amend the By-law as recommended.

BACKGROUND

The City of Surrey has charged a fee for attending false alarms since September 1997. This fee is associated to those costs expended by City services (Fire and Police) on attending alarms that have been verified to be false through negligence of the property owner or the mechanical fault of the alarm system. In the majority of cases, we do not have repeat offenders as their alarm systems have been repaired and all necessary steps taken to eliminate future calls to the Police or Fire Department.

The Fire Department provides a monthly report to our By-law and Licensing Section, whereby letters are immediately sent to the property owner. In the case of Police, a Notice of By-law Infraction is left with the property owner for payment to the City. The following statistics are provided for information:

1997 Total False Alarms attended 11,970

Fire 132 violations

Police	1,047 violations
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1998 (No stats available Alarms attended)

Fire	1,029 violations
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Police	3,467 violations
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1999 Total False Alarms attended 12,596

Fire	640 violations
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Police	3,267 violations
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2000 Total False Alarms attended 13,465

Fire	648 violations
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Police	2,303 violations
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The intent of these fees was to reduce the number of false alarms that both departments were attending. The data is provided for information only as it is difficult to compare these statistics compared to additional installations in both businesses and residential properties. Our data, however, does indicate there are less and less repeat offenders.

DISCUSSION

Under the By-law, the City can proceed by either charging a fee, or as if an offence has been committed. The present form of ticket which is being used makes it appear as though the City is proceeding as if an offence has been committed, rather than charging a fee. A similar type of form can be used making no reference to "*alleged violations*" and "*infractions*", but rather the fact that it is an "*invoice*" for a fee charged under the By-

law. It is more beneficial to the City and the public to charge a fee rather than issue violation notices. The present By-law as written does not provide for reduced fees for early payment of the fee. Early payment reductions are in the voluntary penalty section under which the City does not proceed. These amendments to the By-law will now clarify that early payment of these invoices will result in a reduced fee.

The present fees changed are from \$50.00 to \$55.00 for early payment and \$75.00 to \$80.00 for payment after 14 days of the invoice. These charges are in conjunction with the 4% increase approved by Council to the General Operating Budget.

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that Council adopt these amendments to provide a more consistent and less confusing process by which the Police and Fire may charge fees for these services.

CRAIG MacFARLANE
City Solicitor

c.c. City Manager
Officer in Charge RCMP
Acting Fire Chief

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