

# FALSE FIRE ALARM FEE FACT SHEET



## ➤ What is a false fire alarm?

A false fire alarm is when DFES is alerted to attend a premises in response to an alarm where there is no fire.

## ➤ Why did DFES introduce a fee for attending false fire alarms?

The fee is part of an overall DFES strategy to minimise the number of false fire alarms attended by firefighters. Reducing the number of false fire alarms will assist in resolving the following problems:

- firefighters being unable to attend to a genuine emergency;
- the ineffective use of DFES resources, which means that DFES is not serving the community as effectively as possible; and
- the increased risk to firefighters and the community when firefighting vehicles are driven under emergency conditions.

## ➤ What was the aim of introducing the fee?

The aim of introducing the fee was to encourage the owners and occupants of premises to take appropriate steps to avoid false fire alarm activations occurring at their premises. Owners and occupants need to understand their responsibilities where a monitored fire alarm system is installed within their premises.

## ➤ How much is the fee?

DFES will charge a fee of \$1337 per false fire alarm attendance.

## ➤ What happens if multiple attendances occur within the same 24 hour period?

This will only be calculated as one attendance to allow owners/occupiers time to rectify the issues causing the false fire alarm. (a 24 hour period is calculated from midnight to midnight)

## ➤ When will DFES apply the false fire alarm fee?

The false fire alarm fee will apply after the third false fire alarm attendance to a premises in a financial year. DFES will issue an invoice upon the fourth false fire alarm attendance and every false fire alarm attendance thereafter.

## ➤ Who will receive the invoice?

Under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998*, DFES is required to issue the invoice to the owner/occupant of the premises depending on the circumstances of the alarm.

## ➤ What if I receive an invoice and I'm not the correct/current owner or occupant of the premises?

You will need to contact DFES and provide the details of the correct owner/occupant of the premises and inform Fire Alarm Monitoring Services of the change by emailing [famsaccounts@chubb.com.au](mailto:famsaccounts@chubb.com.au) or by calling 1300 793 722.

## ➤ What power does DFES have to charge for an attendance to a false fire alarm?

The power to charge a fee for the attendance in response to a false fire alarm exists under section 36ZL(1)(d) of the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998*.

## ➤ How frequently do false fire alarms occur?

In 2019/20 firefighters responded to over 8000 false fire alarm activations. This is approximately 23 false fire alarm attendances each day.

## ➤ Is Western Australia the only State that charges a fee for attending to false fire alarms?

No, Western Australia was the last state/territory to introduce a false fire alarm fee. All other states/territories within Australia charge for false fire alarm attendances and have done so for many years.

## ➤ Whose responsibility is it to maintain a fire alarm system?

The owner is responsible for ensuring the fire alarm system and detectors are correctly installed, comply with relevant Australian Standards (AS) and are suitably placed and regularly maintained in accordance with AS1851.

The owner must also ensure fire alarm systems are sufficient and adequate to the current floor plan, layout and purpose of the premises.

The occupier must also ensure the fire alarm system and detectors are adequately maintained and free of items which may cause a false fire alarm such as cobwebs, dust and insects.

## ➤ What if I don't agree with an invoice I've received?

Owner/occupants may apply to have the false fire alarm fee waived. Further information on the waiver process is available on the DFES website.

## ➤ On-billing

DFES has no control over the practices adopted by the owner of premises in relation to on-billing costs for false fire alarms.

DFES does not support the forwarding of false fire alarm fees onto a third party. Should this occur, it is a private matter between the two parties.