

EMERGENCY ALARM REGISTRATION/FALSE EMERGENCY ALARM PROGRAM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Q1: What is the Town of Riverhead's emergency alarm registration and false emergency alarm program?

A: It is a registration, permit and charge schedule program established in 2011 to eliminate or at least minimize the activation of false emergency alarm signals in the Town of Riverhead and response by emergency service personnel (fire and police). The emergency alarm registration and false emergency alarm program is codified in Chapter 203-Alarm Systems, of the Riverhead Town Code, and is available for review at www.townofriverheadny.gov. The emergency alarm registration and false emergency alarm program is designed to assign the responsibility to eliminate or minimize such false emergency alarm activations on real property owners or lessees. Real property owners and/or lessees are in the best position to monitor emergency alarm devices or systems and ensure such devices or systems are in good working order, by contract or otherwise.

Q2: Why was the Town of Riverhead's emergency alarm registration and false emergency alarm program established?

A: The emergency alarm registration and false emergency alarm program, as codified in the Riverhead Town Code, Chapter 203-Alarm Systems, was established by the Riverhead Town Board in 2011 at the request of the four fire districts that serve the Town of Riverhead, namely-Riverhead, Wading River, Jamesport and Manorville, as well as the Riverhead Town Police Department. The fire districts and police department reported to the Riverhead Town Board that they were responding to an inordinate number of false emergency alarms which was subjecting emergency service personnel to unnecessary and dangerous response activation, especially during inclement weather conditions, thereby posing a safety concern to such personnel and the driving public. In addition, false emergency alarm activation requires the unnecessary expenditure of critical resources such as vehicle/equipment depreciation, fuel costs, and other related expenses. In addition, false emergency alarm activations can potentially cause diversion of emergency service personnel response from real emergencies, all at taxpayer's expense.

Q3: How does the Town of Riverhead define a fire or police/security alarm device or system?

A: A fire or police/security alarm device or system is defined as any device or system which, when activated by a fire, criminal act or other emergency requiring police or fire department response, transmits a prerecorded message or other alarm signal by telephone, radio or other communication means to a central alarm station or directly to the police or fire department, or produces an audible or visible alarm signal designed to notify persons within audible or visible range of the signal.

Q4: How does the Town of Riverhead define a false emergency alarm activation?

A: Any alarm signal activated by an emergency alarm device or system to which the fire or police department responds which is not the result of a fire, flame, smoke, combustible event, criminal activity or emergency.

Q5: Who is required to register and obtain a permit regarding the Town of Riverhead's emergency alarm program?

A: All commercial property owners/lessees, industrial property owners/lessees, cooperative (commercial and residential) property owners/lessees, condominium (commercial and residential) property owners/lessees and apartment property owners/lessees in the Town of Riverhead having on his/her/its premises a fire or police/security alarm device, or system of fire or police/security alarm devices, including panic alarms, must apply to the Riverhead Town Police Department for a permit to own or otherwise operate such device or system on his/her/its premises.

Q6: My ownership interest or tenant interest is responsible for providing fire and/or police/security alarm protection services on the subject premises but I am organized as a non-profit organization as recognized by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and/or the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, am I required to register in the Town's emergency alarm program?

A: IRS or NYS-recognized non-profit organizations that are responsible for providing fire and/or police/security alarm protection services are exempt from the Town's registration fee and charge schedule. However, you or your organization is still required to submit a completed emergency alarm registration form. Please complete the applicable section of the emergency alarm registration form regarding non-profit entity status, and kindly forward the supporting IRS/NYS non-profit entity documentation together with the completed emergency alarm registration form.

Q7: Are residential homes required to register and obtain a permit for the alarm program?

A: Residential homes possessing an emergency alarm device or system regarding fire and/or police/security alarm protection services are exempt from program registration requirements.

Q8: Are both real property owners and lessees (those who rent or lease property) regarding the same property required to register for the alarm program, pay the registration/renewal fees, and be subjected to the charge schedule?

A: At a real property owner or lessees' option, based upon lease requirements or otherwise, either the real property owner or lessee must register for the program and be subjected to the charge schedule, but not both.

Q9: How do I obtain an emergency alarm program registration form?

A: You may access the emergency alarm program registration form on the Town of Riverhead web site at www.townofriverheadny.gov, Home Page, Click on EMERGENCY ALARM REGISTRATION/FALSE EMERGENCY ALARM PROGRAM (blue box, right side), Click on EMERGENCY ALARM PROGRAM REGISTRATION form. You may also contact the emergency alarm program coordinator, Gina Hubbard, at 631-727-3200 x 323, hubbardg@townofriverheadny.gov, to request the emergency alarm program registration form. You may email the completed registration form to Gina Hubbard at her email address stated above or mail it to: Riverhead Town Police Department, Attn: Alarm Billing-Gina Hubbard, 210 Howell Avenue, Riverhead, New York, 11901.

Q10: Upon submission of a completed registration form, will I actually be issued a program permit?

A: Upon review and approval of the completed registration form, an approved applicant will be issued a permit number which will be contained on the first invoice (and every invoice thereafter) and is deemed tantamount to an actual approved permit.

Q11: I own or lease more than one property parcel in the Town of Riverhead, do I need to obtain a permit for each location?

A: Yes. Each separate location or multiple alarm systems at the same location, requires a separate permit since the emergency alarm database system and emergency services personnel activity logs are location and/or system specific.

Q12: How does the Town of Riverhead track and record false emergency alarm activations?

A: Both fire and police personnel are required to record false emergency alarm activity at or near the time of location response in field or activity reports which are then conveyed to the emergency alarm program coordinator.

Q13: What are the emergency alarm program registration fees?

A: The initial program registration fee is \$25.00 per each emergency alarm device or system. In addition, an annual registration renewal fee in the amount of \$10.00 is assessed for each and every year thereafter that the premises is serviced by an emergency alarm device or system.

Q14: If my premises are served by two or more emergency alarm systems, am I required to register each alarm system separately?

A: If a property owner or lessee chooses to install and operate two or more separate emergency alarm systems at the same location or property, then each separate alarm system must be registered separately.

Q15: What are the charges for false emergency alarm activations?

A: The first and second false emergency alarm activation in a calendar year incurs **no** charge. The third false emergency alarm activation per calendar year incurs a \$100.00 charge. The fourth false emergency alarm activation per calendar year incurs a \$200.00 charge. The fifth and each subsequent false emergency alarm activation per calendar year incurs a \$300.00 charge.

Q16: When is the registration renewal fee billed and how often are false alarm charges billed to permittees?

A: False alarm registration renewal fees are billed on January 1st of each calendar year and are reflected in the 1Q invoice regarding the applicable calendar year. False alarm charges are billed on a quarterly basis. Unpaid false alarm charges carry over and generate a new and separate invoice number regarding previously unpaid false alarm charges.

Q17: I received a false alarm charge invoice in the mail but I didn't receive any information regarding the date(s) of occurrence(s), can I access the date(s) of occurrence(s) on-line?

A: No. At the present time, the Town of Riverhead cannot provide on-line access of the false emergency alarm date(s) of occurrence(s). Please contact Gina Hubbard, emergency alarm program coordinator, 631-727-3200 x323, hubbardg@townofriverheadny.gov, to obtain the false emergency alarm date(s) of occurrence(s).

Q18: What forms of payment are acceptable to pay the alarm program registration fees and false alarm charges?

A: The Town of Riverhead only accepts payments for alarm program registration fees and false alarm charges by check or money order made payable to the "**Town of Riverhead**". The Town does not accept payments by credit card/debit card, electronic check or cash.

Q19: Where should I send payment regarding the registration fees and false alarm charges?

A: Payments for registration fees and false alarm charges should be mailed to: Riverhead Town Police Department, Attn: Alarm Billing, 210 Howell Avenue, Riverhead, New York, 11901, unless directed otherwise.

Q20: As a Riverhead Town real property owner, I already pay real property taxes regarding the fire and police taxing districts, why am I also subjected to the emergency alarm registration program and false alarm charge schedule? Aren't the costs associated with false emergency alarms defrayed by the real property taxes I pay?

A: As previously stated, fire and police personnel respond to an inordinate number of false fire and police emergency alarm activations on an annual basis which endanger the safety of emergency responders as they rush to what they believe to be an actual emergency. Such false alarm activations also potentially divert emergency responders from other actual emergencies. In addition, false fire and police emergency alarm activations unnecessarily expend and depreciate emergency personnel resources such as fuel and equipment components.

Q21: I received an alarm registration invoice in the mail but I do not have an alarm system on my premises, how should I address that?

A: Please submit a completed and notarized no-alarm affidavit. You may obtain a form copy of the no-alarm affidavit from the Town of Riverhead web site at www.townofriverheadny.gov, Home Page, Click on EMERGENCY ALARM REGISTRATION/FALSE EMERGENCY ALARM PROGRAM (blue box, right side), Click on NO-ALARM AFFIDAVIT. You may also contact Gina Hubbard, Riverhead Town Police Department, 631-7272-3200 x 323, hubbardg@townofriverheadny.gov who can also forward to you a no-alarm affidavit. Submission of a completed and notarized no-alarm affidavit serves as the authority to remove your business or premises from the emergency alarm program's fee and charge schedule. You may complete, notarize and email the no-alarm affidavit to Gina Hubbard at her email address stated above or mail it to: Riverhead Town Police Department, Attn: Alarm Billing-Gina Hubbard, 210 Howell Avenue, Riverhead, New York, 11901.

Q22: Who do I contact if I wish to dispute or adjudicate false alarm charges?

A: After reviewing the false alarm occurrence list and corroborating alarm occurrences with your respective alarm services provider, you may contact Daniel P. McCormick, Esq., Deputy Town Attorney, Town of Riverhead, 631-727-3200 x 605, mccormick@townofriverheadny.gov, to dispute or adjudicates false alarm charges.

(Revised May 2, 2017)