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Dear <-->

**Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UwFS)**

**Premises:-**

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service have recently attended an unwanted fire signal generated by the fire alarm system at the above premises, the incident details are included below:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Time** | **Inc. No.** | **Cause** |
|  |  |  |  |

Each year Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service attend in excess of 2,000 false alarms, many of which are generated by automatic fire detection systems. This high rate of false alarms does have an impact on the operational efficiency of the service exposing the communities of Shropshire to unnecessary risk. To understand the problems false alarms cause we would like you to consider the following points;

* False alarms expose our communities to unnecessary risk as their fire cover may be depleted.
* They put other road users, the public and fire fighters at unnecessary risk when responding under emergency conditions.
* They impose financial burdens on fire authorities in relation to mobilising costs such as salaries of fire fighters on the retained (part-time) duty system, fuel overheads, wear and tear of appliances, etc. We estimate that each call costs the council tax payer over £300.
* False alarms erode the confidence of the users in the value and reliability of the fire detection systems. Consequently, there is a real danger that in the case of a fire, evacuation of premises could be delayed because of previous false alarm experience.
* Of course, they create unnecessary interruptions to your own activities resulting in substantial costs and inconvenience to yourselves. Our records indicate that

Following this activation, we now request that you undertake a review of your procedures, and carry out the following to ensure that further incidents are avoided.

**System Fault (Power Failure)**

Your fire alarm system must be provided with a battery back-up to ensure continuity of the power supply in the event of a failure of the mains supply. Upon an interruption to the mains supply, the change to the battery back-up should be seamless (and vice versa), and not cause a fire signal to be generated. The fact that your system has registered a fire signal, and not simply a fault warning, indicates that there is a fault with the system. You should ensure that your competent fire alarm engineer attends to rectify this problem at once.

If your premises are situated in an area that is prone to power failures, you are also advised to arrange for the installation of a suitable surge protection device to further reduce the likelihood of UwFS being generated.

**Subsequent Action**

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service actively review all poorly performing premises. Where we believe the reliability of the system is open to question or where the management control of on-site activities fails to eliminate avoidable UwFS the following actions would be taken.

**Level 1**

1. A phone call further reviewing options taken and a necessary action plan going forward.
2. A visit by a Fire Safety Officer covering a detailed assessment of your procedures, action plan and notification of the next Response Level.

**Level 2**

A full Fire Safety Audit will be undertaken if one has not been completed in the previous 12 months and your premises may be subject to a level of enforcement in accordance with the Authority policy. Enforcement will generally result in the following two areas of activity:

(a) Informal Notification by which responsible persons are advised of areas of non-compliance and where appropriate, methods of remedy.

(b) Formal notices, an enforcement notice served on the responsible person with to ensure they are meeting their requirements of maintaining a safe environment under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO).

**Level 3**

Another option open to us is to not respond to any calls via the automatic fire detection system and Alarm Receiving Centres. We would, of course, mobilise upon receipt of a ‘999’ call to any confirmed incidence of fire. Any change in our policy would need to be communicated to your insurers, and we have indications that insurance premiums and sometimes the provision of insurance cover itself can be adversely affected.

For further advice on reducing false alarms please visit our website <https://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/promoting-safer-communities/business-fire-safety/unwanted-fire-signals>