

**From:**

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**Subject:**

Feedback Form

False Alarm Reduction Project Consultation Paper:

**From:** no-reply=tasfire.clients.ionata.com.au@mailgun.clients.ionata.com.au <no-reply=tasfire.clients.ionata.com.au@mailgun.clients.ionata.com.au> **On Behalf Of** Tasmania Fire Service

**Sent:** Friday, November 3, 2023 3:00 PM

**To:** TFS False Alarm Reduction Strategy <TFSFARS@fire.tas.gov.au>

**Subject:** New submission from False Alarm Reduction Project Consultation Paper: Feedback Form

**1. By making a submission to this consultation you agree to the collection of information you provide in your submission and the use of the information; and non-disclosure of personal information as outlined above.**

Agree

**2. On who's behalf are you making this submission? (Please select one item only)**

I am making this submission on behalf of an industry body.

**3. Are you an DPFEM internal employee, external employee, external stakeholder, retained or volunteer firefighter?**

Other

**Please specify**

None of the above

**Do you have any suggestions or recommendations on particular areas that TFS should target through the development of policy and guidelines that will support the decision-making process to effectively reduce false alarms?**

A clearly written policy or guideline on false alarms will help to increase awareness and understanding about the issues. They should outline some of the major causes of false alarms, the consequences if an alarm is activated inappropriately, and how they can be prevented.

Some of the areas that a policy or guideline might cover could include:

- why false alarms are a problem;
- causes of false alarms – poor maintenance, cooking, steam, aerosols; smoking, candles, and incense; dust or fumes from construction work; malicious or accidental activity; poorly installed or located detectors; poor ventilation; and insect infestation;
- penalties for false alarms – include escalating penalties for recurring incidents;
- what detectors should be used in different areas of a residence, and different types of detection;
- the importance of building maintenance;
- who should install/maintain detectors and following the CoP as per permit conditions.
- the education of occupants.
- TFS personnel should undergo training on various fire panels to ensure accurate information is communicated to the service provider regarding false alarms. Service provider details should be displayed on the fire panel at each site, and a copy of the incident report should be sent to the service provider in addition to the client.
- TFS personnel should be skilled in operating fire pumps and sprinkler systems. Companies are required to adhere to specific standards and obtain approval from TFS building safety. However, there is currently no training for TFS staff on interpreting block plans and understanding the fire services infrastructure installed in buildings throughout Tasmania, and how to utilize this information in a fire emergency.

**What advice and support do you require from frontline staff to take action to reduce the occurrence of repeat false alarms?**

Training is essential not only for frontline staff but should also be made available as an option for individuals responsible for false alarms, aiming to educate them about the associated risks. In cases where a technician's error leads to a call for Tas fire to attend the site, there shouldn't be a requirement for a full investigation. The attending crew can communicate with the technician to identify the issue and quickly resume their duties, minimizing downtime for the responding team

**What type of resources would you find useful to assist in reducing the incidence of false alarms? And, what type of information do you require?**

As previously mentioned, training is essential not only for frontline staff but should also be made accessible as an option for individuals responsible for false alarms, providing them with education about the associated risks.

This training initiative should be accessible to a wide range of individuals, including TFS staff, property owners, occupants, bodies corporate, strata managers, practitioners, and the general public. The content of the training should be tailored to address specific concerns relevant to each segment.

The training could follow the same structure as identified in question 4. Some potential questions for consideration might include:

- how do smoke and heat detectors work?
- how to identify smoke, heat and other alarm types?
- what are false alarms?
- Why do they occur? What factors cause them (e.g. human, contamination, environmental)?
- Why are they a problem?
- How can we minimise false alarms?

Implement guidelines mandating that properly trained and authorized individuals handle the operation of fire systems and perform isolations when necessary. Unfortunately, numerous unqualified individuals engage in activities that hinder the functioning of the fire system., such as:

- Open the door to stop local alarm.
- Turn EWIS key to manual or isolate.
- Leave ASE key in isolate.
- Isolate bells/ sounder via control buttons.
- Use plastic wrap, rubber gloves or detector covers to prevent false alarms, then forget to remove them when the work is completed.
- No isolation logbook entries completed. This causes confusion as to the state of the fire system for other people attending site.

**What considerations do you believe should be incorporated into a methodology for the setting of fees and charges relating to premises with monitored alarms?**

Charges for false alarms need to be just, appropriate, and proportionate. Instead of immediately imposing fees for false alarms, the agency should prioritize educating individuals responsible for them, aiming to prevent future occurrences. If fees are implemented, they should increase in severity for repeated incidents and be specifically directed at the individuals triggering the alarms, such as residents, rather than burdening the building's body corporate.

Consider displaying signs indicating penalty costs for system resets, especially in locations like hotels.

**How might TFS be able to provide an improved service to premises owners in the payment of fees and charges related to alarm premises?**

Prioritizing education over financial penalties provides owners with a chance to implement measures preventing future violations. This educational initiative should focus on the necessary approval procedures for modifying sanctioned fire systems, addressing the common lack of understanding among facility managers regarding the process, especially when it comes to changing detector types.

**Have you any other ideas on how TFS may be able to provide a more efficient and effective service in relation to alarmed premises?**

Having a skilled and experienced workforce to install these systems can decrease the likelihood of incorrectly placed or installed detectors triggering inappropriate activations.

There is a pressing need to expand the limited pool of technicians specializing in both dry and wet fire systems.

Considering individual permits as a supplement to the existing company permit system is crucial. This approach guarantees that technicians working on these systems possess the necessary expertise, rather than merely being employees of a business holding a permit.

It is evident that TFS operational crews lack comprehensive training in operating all fire systems in Tasmania, particularly when it comes to larger sites. Increasing their site visits and inspections, especially in significant establishments, would be invaluable.

It could be beneficial for TFS operational crews to receive training on all fire systems. Additionally, increasing their presence in larger sites for inspections might enhance their understanding of the installed fire systems.

Explore the feasibility of introducing a minor works category specifically for changing false alarming device types. This category could be limited to cases where the change is endorsed by an approved Fire Services Designer, such as those specializing in dry fire, and provided a start work form is submitted. Presently, the permit type system allows companies and their employees to undertake these tasks.

Simplify the procedure for upgrading fire panels from conventional to addressable systems.