

Fire Alarm Ordinance – Municipal Corner

Monitored Fire Alarms: After a public hearing process the Selectboard voted to amend the Town of Stowe Fire Alarm Ordinance. It regulates any mechanism or device used for the detection of fire, heat, smoke, sprinkler activation, carbon monoxide, or any other condition or hazard, designed to transmit a signal directly to an alarm company or dispatch center which, in turn, notifies the Fire Department by telephonic or other means of communication, and to which the Fire Department is expected to respond.

The intent of the regulation is to help protect your public safety by enabling us to locate and access a structure in a timely manner in the event of an emergency. It is also intended to reduce the number of false alarms that require a fire department response.

Among the requirements is to have a lock box on your property. This allows responders to arrive and quickly gain access to the property without waiting for key holders. As a last resort, if access isn't provided to the fire department, they must gain access by force. This can be quite costly for the property owner. The ordinance only allows for "fire department approved lock boxes." You can purchase these at www.knoxbox.com. Once you have received the box and mounted it in a readily accessible location, that is approved by the fire chief, a member of the fire department will come lock the keys inside the box for you.

Another requirement is to have your 911 address posted in a manner that it is visible from the roadway. In the past, responders have spent considerable amounts of time trying to find the location of the incident and time is important in an emergency response. You are required to post your 911 address in a location that is appropriate to readily identify the property served by the fire alarm system. The ordinance requires the numbers to be at least 3" in height. You can purchase these number(s) and signs at a hardware store or online. Stowe Rescue Squad Inc, a non-profit organization that supports the Town of Stowe Department of EMS, also sells reflective green and white signs. They can be purchased for a fee. The order form can be found at dps.stowevt.gov.

The revised ordinance has financial penalties for not complying with these requirements and repetitive false alarms. With this being said, the ultimate goal is to bring all properties that have a monitored fire alarm into compliance. Help us help you by installing a lock box, clearly posting your street address, and ensuring your fire alarm is maintained.

You will be able to find the new ordinance posted on the Stowe Public Safety website and the Town of Stowe's website, located at dps.stowevt.gov and www.townofstowevt.org respectively. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Chief Kyle Walker at kwalker@stowevt.gov and 802-253-4315.

Emerald Ash Borer: It is knocking on Stowe's door. The invasive insect that has been discovered in 10 areas throughout Vermont is expected to kill up to 100% of all the ash trees in an area once it is infested. Since the Selectboard approved an Emerald Ash Borer Preparedness Plan developed by the Conservation Commission this past spring, EAB has been discovered in four Vermont communities. There is no doubt it will arrive in Stowe; it is just a matter of when.

Charlie Lusk Stowe Tree Warden, along with the Conservation Commission, have expressed the need for the Town of Stowe to prepare for it and to start budgeting accordingly. They have recommended that all ash trees within the town highway right-of-way be removed and that this process begins as soon as

funding is available. Once ash trees become infected, the wood becomes brittle and they become much more dangerous, difficult and costly to remove.

In order to accomplish this objective, we plan to budget funds in the FY2021 budget, develop a complete inventory of ash trees in the town highway right-of-way along with a cost estimate for future budget consideration to harvest the trees before they pose a threat to public safety.

Town of Stowe Logo: A number of years ago, the Stowe Selectboard adopted a Town of Stowe logo for municipal identification purposes. Some departments use the logo as adopted or a variation of it which incorporates their historic departmental logo.

You may have seen it on some employee uniforms, public street signs, municipal park signs, town owned buildings, and some municipal vehicles. The Town will be increasing its efforts to use it on a broader basis to help you identify if something is a municipally owned land, building or equipment. This will not only help raise awareness of municipally tax supported services and properties but also will identify our employees that are out in the field.

Holidays & New Year: Best wishes to all of you for an enjoyable holiday season and for a happy new year. Let's work together as a community to continue moving forward in a positive direction. Please stop by or email me if I can be of any assistance with any municipal matter. If I can't help you, I will try to direct you to someone that can (csafford@stowevt.gov or 253-7350).