

ORDINANCE NO. 1290

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SNOQUALMIE,
WASHINGTON, CREATING A NEW CHAPTER OF THE
SNOQUALMIE MUNICIPAL CODE WITHIN TITLE 9, RELATING
TO THE MISUSE OF THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE SYSTEM;
PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

WHEREAS, the City of Snoqualmie utilizes the Issaquah Police Communications 911 Center as its communication and dispatch center to provide emergency assistance to the residents of the City of Snoqualmie; and

WHEREAS, it is potentially a danger and misuse of public resources when individuals call the emergency communication system with knowledge that no emergency exists, using time and resources of the communication center and Snoqualmie and Issaquah Police; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has determined it is in the best interest of the City to adopt a new section to its criminal code to prohibit misuse of the 911 emergency response system;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Snoqualmie, Washington, as follows:

Section 1. A new chapter 9.88 of the Snoqualmie Municipal Code is hereby adopted to read as follows:

Chapter 9.88

Misuse of the 911 Emergency Response System

9.88.010 Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is intended to reduce the number of false requests for emergency services or similar misuse of the 911 emergency response system, which occurs within the city and results in the waste of city resources, by providing a criminal penalty for violators, and imposing an administrative fee.

9.88.020 Offense of Misuse of the 911 Emergency Response System

A. A person commits the crime of misuse of the 911 emergency response system if the person knowingly:

1. Makes repeated calls, irrespective of the duration of time between the calls, to the Issaquah Police Communications 911 Center or Snoqualmie Police non-emergency line for a purpose other than (a) to report a situation that the person reasonably believes requires prompt service in order to preserve human life or property or, (b) to report new information in an active investigation. “Repeated calls” means the repeated reporting of incidents that have already been reported, without providing new information regarding the incident; repeated requests to speak to specific officers when the caller’s purpose is not germane to the reporting of new information about an incident; or the repeated harassment of specific officers using rude, lewd, or threatening language; or
2. Makes an emergency call or calls to the Issaquah Police Communications 911 Center for a purpose other than to report a situation that the person reasonably believes requires prompt service in order to preserve human life or property; or
3. Allows another person to use communications equipment owned, rented, or leased by or under the control of the person to make an emergency call or calls to the Issaquah Police Communications 911 Center for a purpose other than to report a situation that the other person reasonably believes requires prompt service in order to preserve human life or property.

B. For purposes of this chapter, “person” means and includes any natural person, partnership, joint stock company, or corporation of any character whatsoever.

C. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed or interpreted to impose criminal liability on any person who makes a good faith request for emergency assistance to the Issaquah Police Communications 911 Center or the Snoqualmie Police non-emergency line when such person reasonably believes that an emergency situation exists.

9.88.030 Penalties.

Unless otherwise provided in this chapter, any person violating any provision of this chapter shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, be sentenced to a fine not to exceed \$1,000 and/or a term of up to 90 days in jail.

9.88.040 Imposition of Fees.

In addition to or as an alternative to any criminal penalty, the city may impose a civil penalty of up to five hundred dollars per incident at the request of the Issaquah Police Communications 911 Center or Snoqualmie Police Department upon any misuse of the 911 emergency response system.

Section 2. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect five days after its passage and publication, as provided by law.

Section 3. Severability. If any portion of this ordinance is found to be invalid or unenforceable for any reason, such finding shall not affect the validity or enforceability of any other section of this ordinance.

Section 4. Corrections by the City Clerk or Code Reviser. Upon approval of the City Attorney, the City Clerk and Code Reviser are authorized to make necessary corrections to this ordinance, including the correction of clerical errors; references to other local, state or federal laws, codes, rules, or regulations, or ordinance numbering and section/subsection numbering.

PASSED by the City Council of the City of Snoqualmie, Washington this ____ day of May 2024.

Katherine Ross, Mayor

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Deana Dean, City Clerk

David Linehan, Interim City Attorney