

False Alarm Prevention At HOME

What is a False Alarm?

"A false alarm is notification of an alarm to the police department when the responding authority finds no evidence of criminal offense or attempted criminal offense."

False Alarms . . .

...Take police and fire fighters away from real emergencies. This embarrassing situation endangers responding authorities and the whole community by needlessly diverting public safety resources.

...Desensitize communities to actual incidents of crime and fire and can lead to neighbors ignoring your alarm when it goes off.

...Make your security system less reliable and credible.

...May make you reluctant to arm your system, exposing your home and property to undetected theft or fire.

...Cost citizens time, personal security and money, as many jurisdictions assess costly fines for excessive false alarms.

THE REALITY IS THAT POLICE RESOURCES ARE LIMITED AND SHOULD NEVER BE WASTED. THOUSANDS OF POLICE PATROL HOURS ARE SPENT INVESTIGATING ALARM REPORTS THAT TURN OUT TO BE "FALSE ALARMS."

Common causes of FALSE ALARMS

1. Inadequate training of people allowed access to your security system (children, neighbors, cleaning personnel, real estate agents, guests, relatives, babysitters, service and delivery personnel, etc.)
2. Weak system batteries.
3. Open, unlocked or loose fitting doors and windows.
4. Drafts from heaters and air conditioning systems that move plants, curtains, balloons, etc.
5. Wandering pets.

The three major causes of false alarms are *user errors, installation or service errors, and equipment failures.*

Did you know that more than 80% of false alarms are related to preventable user errors?

Did you know that 20% of alarm users cause 80% of all false alarms?

Do you think alarmed locations are entitled to unlimited police response?

Do you think you are at greater risk when police, accustomed to responding to chronic false alarms, respond to a real emergency at your location?

Alarm companies and alarm users must be responsible for the use and maintenance of alarm systems to help ensure prompt police response when an emergency really does exist. FARA, working with NBFSA and other state and national alarm associations, has been studying the false alarm problem and solutions for some time. Working with law enforcement, businesses and the community, there is documented proof that response to false alarms can be dramatically reduced.

Installing & activating an alarm system

When purchasing an alarm system you must remember that you are a vital part of the alarm function. You must completely understand how the system works, what it does and does not do, and what you must do to keep it in proper operating condition.

Ensure all users of your system are provided adequate and thorough instruction on using and testing the system. Ask your alarm company to provide you with written instructions as well as a physical demonstration.

Ensure outside audible alarms are set to sound for no more than 15 minutes before resetting.

How Can You Prevent False Alarms?

Before activating your system . . .

- Lock all protected doors and windows.
- Keep pets, balloons, fans, heaters, plants, curtains, seasonal decorations, etc. away from motion sensor areas.
- Know how to cancel the alarm if the system activates.

Educate alarm system users . . .

- All users, key holders or any person with legal access to your property must be thoroughly trained in how to operate your system, including knowledge of correct arming codes, pass codes, telephone numbers and procedures for canceling accidental alarm activations.

Have your security company check and service your system regularly . . .

- Routine maintenance can help prevent many false alarms.

Notify your security company if . . .

- You think your system isn't working properly.
- You plan any remodeling, including replacing doors or windows, hanging drywall, sanding floors, installing attic flooring or basement ceiling, changing phone systems, installing intercoms, siding, ceiling fans or skylights, fumigating, installing wiring for cable or other electronics, installing anything near the system control panel or keypads.
- You hire domestic help, get a new pet, plan to sell your house, or are testing your system.

Contact the Marion County Sheriff's Alarm Coordinator if . . .

- You have a phone service or name change, or if situations change, such as a disabled person now residing at the residence, etc.

Other factors to remember . . .

- Your central monitoring station should not request a police dispatch for power outages, low battery signals or loss of telephone connections.
- Replace old police department direct-connect monitoring equipment with newer, high security monitoring technology.
- **Dirty or wet phone lines, telephone repairmen and service interruptions do not require police response!**
- Upgrade old alarm systems to current equipment conforming to Security Industry Association (SIA) false alarm prevention standards, further reducing false alarms.

CHECKLIST

- Are you and others who use the system fully educated on its proper operation?**
- Does everyone with a key to your home know how to operate your security system?**
- Do you take care to eliminate possible causes of false alarms?**
- Have you rehearsed alarm cancellation procedures with all who use your system to cancel accidental alarm activations?**
- Do you communicate with your security company regularly, advising of schedule changes, problem areas or maintenance needs?**
- Do you notify your local Alarm Coordinator when phone numbers or situations change?**
- Do you have your security system instruction book and alarm company names and telephone numbers readily available in order to call and cancel accidental alarm activations?**

