



False Alarm Prevention At HOME

What is a False Alarm?

"A false alarm is notification of an alarm to law enforcement 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, when many jurisdictions assess costly fines for excessive false alarms.

3 MAJOR CAUSES OF FALSE ALARMS:

1. **User error.**
2. **Installation or service errors.**
3. **Equipment failure.**

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, real estate agents, cleaning personnel, guests, relatives, babysitters, service & 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.

- **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. The False Alarm Reduction Association (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.

***Marion County Ordinance 1329, Chapter 8.25.090B** requires all monitoring companies, prior to making a law enforcement alarm dispatch request, attempt a verification call to alarmed premise. If the alarm user is not contacted on the initial verification call, to attempt a second verification call to a cell phone or alternate contact number designated by the alarm user. (This does not apply to robbery hold-up/panic/duress alarms.) ALARM USERS NEED TO PROVIDE THEIR MONITORING COMPANY WITH THE REQUIRED NAMES AND PHONE NUMBERS, ENABLING THEM TO FULLFIL THIS DUTY.

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 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

- Everyone using the system is fully educated on its proper operation.
- Everyone with a key to my home knows how to operate my security system.
- I take care to eliminate possible causes of false alarms.
- I have provided my monitoring company with the required names and phone numbers to which verification calls should be made, prior to requesting law enforcement dispatch.
- Cancellation procedures are rehearsed with all who use my system, to cancel accidental alarm activations.
- I communicate with my alarm monitoring company regularly, advising them of schedule changes, problem areas & any maintenance concerns.
- I informed my alarm monitoring company of my Alarm Permit Number.
- I notify the Sheriff's Alarms Coordinator with phone number or other changes: 503.584.4768
- My security system's instruction book & alarm company phone numbers are readily available in order to cancel accidental alarm activations.