

False alarms are a significant problem for law enforcement throughout the country. False alarms waste resources and divert or delay response to calls that may be true emergencies. Working together, we can reduce false alarms, which will preserve resources and provide more time for officers to engage in crime prevention initiatives and patrol of neighborhoods. The False Alarm Reduction Section (FARS) has prepared this brochure to help you avoid common mistakes that cause false alarms.



- Before selecting an alarm system, consult one of our security specialists to discuss the type of system and features that will be appropriate for you and your living/working environment.
  - Ask each alarm company how the system they propose avoids false alarms.
  - Ask how you can operate it in order to avoid false alarms.
  - Ask the FARS what the false alarm rate is for the companies you are considering.

Cancel the alarm at 123 Main ...



What is your cancellation code?



- Review procedures with your alarm company that you expect them to follow when an alarm activates. Do you want them to make two calls; one to the location and one to your cell, before requesting police dispatch? Do you only want the police notified if an exterior and interior alarm activate? Put your instructions in writing?

- Fully educate and train every person with access to your home or business on the precise operation of your alarm system. This may include domestic/cleaning crews, children, neighbors, caretakers, employees, and temporary staff.



- Be aware that cleaning and repair crews do cause false alarms for which you will be responsible.
- If you give them a key, give them a code! Be sure that all individuals with authority to operate your system have been given their own personal password or passcode. Notify your alarm and/or monitoring company of any changes in authorized persons and codes.



- Keep door and window frames in good condition – sagging, warped and loose fitting doors and windows may prevent a tight connection with the alarm contacts. Consider using wide gap contacts on all doors.



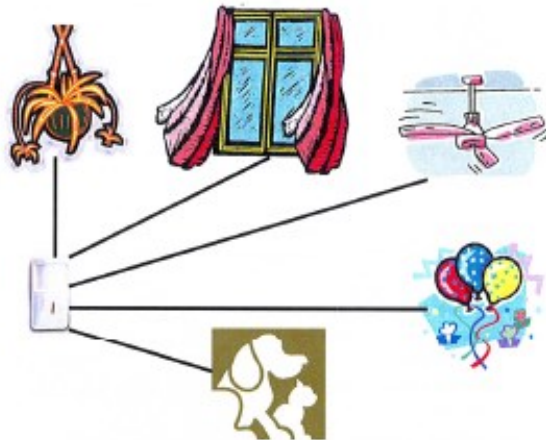
- Always keep doors and windows locked when the alarm is in the "ON" mode to reduce the chance that friends, neighbors or customers may enter

and cause the alarm to activate.



**REDUCE  
FALSE BURGLAR  
ALARMS!**

- Check for drafts that may move curtains, hanging objects or holiday decorations, which can cause motion detectors to activate.



- If you have pets, take special care to purchase an alarm system that is pet friendly. You may not want to purchase motion detectors if your pets have free run of the house when the alarm is on. Cats + motion detectors = a false alarm every time! Be sure to discuss pet concerns with your alarm company.

- Power surges and lightning strikes should not cause false alarms. Use surge protectors/suppressors on **both** the alarm system and the phone line sending the alarm signal to the monitoring center to avoid false alarms.



- If you acquire new furniture or do extensive rearrangement of existing furniture, be mindful of interior sensors that may be affected.



- Confirm that special consideration has been given to the installation of motion sensors or detectors in high bay areas with overhead doors, large exhaust fans or ceiling vents, which allow birds to enter.



- Before activating your alarm system, be sure to securely close and lock all protected doors and windows.
- Have your alarm system inspected by a licensed alarm company on an annual basis.
- Have an alarm technician replace the batteries in your alarm system as per manufacturer's specifications. Wireless systems may need battery replacement more often than wired systems.



- Regular maintenance, such as checking the battery, cleaning motion sensors, replacing door/window contacts and testing the overall operation of the equipment will help alleviate costly false alarms and extend the life of your alarm system.



- Test your alarm system regularly. Be sure to notify your alarm/monitoring company **first** so that no request for police dispatch is made. **Do not set your alarm off for the purpose of testing!** You **will** be charged with a false alarm.

**Stay in regular contact with your alarm company!** Make sure your emergency contact list is current and accurate. Call your alarm company if you:

- have an unexplained false alarm
- get a pet
- begin a home improvement or renovation project
- change your phone number, install DSL, or switch to a VoIP (Internet based) phone provider
- hire a contractor
- fumigate
- plan to sell your home

**Know what to do if you accidentally set off your alarm.**

**First: Don't panic!**

Carefully enter your disarm code to reset your system.

**Second:** Wait for your alarm company or monitoring center to call and give them the proper passcode or password.

Some alarm companies instruct their customers to contact them if they accidentally activate their alarm. Carefully rehearse and follow the instructions given by your alarm company to cancel a false alarm.

**Third: DO NOT** leave your home or business until you have talked with your alarm monitoring company. **Do not call 911 to cancel an alarm activation. You must call your monitoring center.**



False burglar alarms waste your tax dollars. The False Alarm Reduction Section is committed to working cooperatively with alarm users and alarm companies to reduce false alarms

**Together we can make a difference!**

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