



## False Alarm Prevention Tips



False alarms present a serious threat to the effectiveness of our local police, fire and EMS departments, as well as to the safety of our citizens. False alarms are costly and dangerous because they divert police officers from proactive crime prevention efforts and can divert public safety responses from true emergency calls.

### **Major causes of false alarms:**

- User error
- Unlocked or loose doors/windows
- Children, neighbors, guests and visitors
- Cleaning crews, repairmen, pet sitters
- Pets or other wildlife
- Equipment malfunction
- Forgetting the disarm or cancellation codes

### **Tips to Reduce False alarms:**

- Pre-Plan and maintain alarm company contact information
- Are you and others who use the security system fully educated on its proper operation? This may include domestic/cleaning crews, children, neighbors, caretakers, employees and temporary staff.
- For intrusion alarms, your alarm monitoring company can be directed to call you and a second number before dispatching police to verify if the alarm is valid.
- Make sure your contact information is current so the alarm monitoring company can contact you.
- If traveling, update the alarm company with temporary contacts.
- Ensure all authorized users know procedures to engage, disengage and cancel an alarm.
- Train all employees responding to activations how the complete system operates.

### **Before activating your alarm system:**

- Make sure to securely close and lock all protected doors and windows before setting the alarm
- Keep pets, balloons, fans, heaters, etc. away from motion sensor areas

- Know and rehearse the process to cancel an accidental alarm. *Anyone with your key should know the disarm and cancellation processes!*
- Know how much time you have to leave after arming the system.

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

- First, don't panic. Carefully enter your disarm code to reset your system.
- Wait for your alarm monitoring company to call and give them your password.
- *Do not leave your home or business until you have talked with your monitoring station!* If they don't call you, call them and cancel the police.
- If you are unable to cancel the alarm and police are responding, wait outside where you will be visible to arriving officers. Let arriving officers know you are responsible for the alarm.

**Tips for home:**

- DO NOT call 911 to cancel alarm activations - Call the alarm monitoring company and have their phone number handy!
- Avoid objects that trigger your alarm such as unlocked, loose fitting, or open doors or windows, balloons, curtains, plants - Moving objects may trigger motion sensors
- Make sure your system handles pets. Motion detectors may detect pet movement and barking may activate glass break detectors

**Tips for your business:**

- Be aware of:
  - Swinging doors or windows
  - Banners, signs, balloons, plants or curtains caught in drafts
  - Unsupervised guests
  - Stacked items may fall and set off motion detectors
  - Untrained or unaware employees
  - Equipment or employees may accidently dislodge motion sensors throughout the building
- Inform vendors and custodial crews who access your facilities

**Contact your alarm company when:**

- Planning improvements, renovation projects, and major equipment upgrades
- When changing batteries as an interrupted power supply may trigger an activation
- To review alarm activation procedures with the alarm company