

## Know what to do if you set off your alarm by accident

- ▶ First, do not panic. Enter your disarm code (carefully!) to reset your system.
- ▶ Wait for your alarm company or central monitoring station to call, give your password or ID card number.
- ▶ DO NOT leave your home or business until you have talked with your monitoring station. If they do not call you, have the number posted by your keypad and contact them to cancel the police dispatch. **Do not call 911 to cancel an alarm activation. You must call your monitoring station.** You can arrange to have your alarm monitoring station call you or another designated person first before the Police Department is called whenever your alarm is activated. If you are aware of a problem with the system, you can cancel the law enforcement dispatch.
- ▶ Review with your alarm/monitoring company the procedures you expect them to follow when an alarm activates. Do you want them to attempt to call more than one person on your contact list before requesting law enforcement dispatch? Do you only want the police notified if exterior and interior zones are both activated?
- ▶ Put your instructions in writing!



## The Alarm Ordinance

Each security/alarm system **MUST** be registered with the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office, and must be renewed every two years.  
*The Town of Leesburg has adopted the County's ordinance, which is administered by the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office.*

### False Alarm Fees:

Two (2) "free" false alarms per calendar year

Residential	
1 <sup>st</sup>	No charge
2 <sup>nd</sup>	No charge
3 <sup>rd</sup>	\$100
4 <sup>th</sup>	\$150
5 <sup>th</sup>	\$200
6 <sup>th</sup>	\$250
7 <sup>th</sup>	\$300
8 <sup>th</sup>	\$350
9 <sup>th</sup>	\$400
10 <sup>th</sup>	\$500
11 <sup>th</sup>	\$600
12 <sup>th</sup>	\$700
13 <sup>th</sup>	\$800
14 <sup>th</sup>	\$900
15 <sup>th</sup>	\$1000 each

Leesburg Police Department  
 False Alarm Reduction Program  
 65 Plaza Street, NE  
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# Residential False Alarm Prevention



Chief Greg Brown

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# What is a false alarm?

A false alarm is the activation of a security system to which the Emergency Communication Center (911) is notified, yet is not the result of criminal activity occurring or had occurred.

False alarms are steadily on the rise. Each year false alarms cost all of us thousands of dollars as deputies are diverted from proactive prevention efforts. You as the system user also experience the inconvenience of false alarms and the assessment of fines. False alarms must concern each of us. **Our goal is to reduce the growing number of false alarms, which have a significant impact on resources, affecting the community as a whole.**

## False Alarm Reduction Unit

To discourage repeat false alarms, Loudoun County passed an ordinance requiring law enforcement to track false alarms and charge a fee to the alarm user for repeat false alarms. The Program calls for both a registration for security systems and a tiered fine system for residents and companies with excessive false alarms.

The False Alarm Reduction Unit of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office was created to administer the County's False Alarm Reduction Ordinance. The program's main function is to reduce the number of false alarms that police respond to each year.

The False Alarm Reduction Unit registers alarm companies and alarm users, sends notification of false alarms, and bills for excessive false alarms in accordance with the Ordinance.

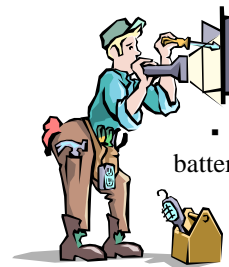
# Major causes of false alarms

## Human Errors

- Use of incorrect keypad codes.
- Failure to train other authorized users.
- Failure to secure doors and windows before turning on alarm.
- Failure to notify monitoring facility of unscheduled openings or closings.
- Failure to update authorized personnel list with monitoring facility.



## Equipment Problems



- Improper application or installation of interior motion detectors.
- Improper application or installation of outdoor beams.
- Improper charging or checking of batteries.
- Faulty equipment (i.e., panels, detectors, keypads, etc.).

## How to avoid false alarms

- ▶ Train all users – make sure all users know the code number and code word – and know how to operate the system.
- ▶ Re-Entering – if you re-enter your premises because you have forgotten something, turn off the alarm and re-set it when you leave again.
- ▶ If you accidentally set off an alarm make sure all phones are on the hook and wait for your alarm company to call you back.

- ▶ Motion detector alarms – be aware of what can cause motion detector alarms: helium balloons (especially Mylar), pets, bugs on the lens, curtains.
- ▶ Door and window alarms – must be tight fitting and locked, must be free of paint and varnish, make sure there are no door or window warping and check weathering of security screens.
- ▶ Duress codes – appears to turn off the system but sends a special emergency message to your monitoring center, for example, if you were forced to turn off the system against your will.
- ▶ Bypassing Zones – know how to “bypass” (shut off) the motion detector when you are at home. Know how to shut off a malfunctioning component (zone) until repair is completed.
- ▶ Keypad entry errors – know how to “clear” a wrong code if you make a mistake on the keypad. Some keypads only require that you eventually get the right numbers in sequence.
- ▶ Inspect the alarm system – Follow your alarm company's instructions on testing the system regularly – **DO NOT test it by intentionally setting it off.** Have your alarm company replace batteries as needed; wireless systems generally require this more often. Any broken contacts should be replaced immediately. Pests and rodents can chew through system wires.

## Call alarm company when:

- ▶ you have an unexplained false alarm.
- ▶ you get an indoor pet.
- ▶ you are about to remodel.
- ▶ your phone number changes
- ▶ you want to change your emergency contacts
- ▶ you are moving.
- ▶ you are going to be out of town for an extended period of time.

**Be part of the solution – not part of the problem!**