

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is a False Alarm?

The activation of an alarm system through mechanical failure, malfunction, improper installation or maintenance, or the negligence of the owner, lessee, or his/her employees or agents shall constitute a false alarm.

## What is NOT a False Alarm?

Alarms caused by acts of nature such as earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, or other violent, uncontrollable acts of nature shall **not** be considered false alarms.

## When to Call the Police?

If you find evidence of a criminal activity or unauthorized intrusion, call the Police Department's Service Center at 916-264-5868 and make a report. The report number you receive will need to be given to the Alarm Unit to waive the false alarm fee.

## How to Appeal Service Fees?

If an alarm owner believes they have been charged unjustly, the homeowner or business owner may mail a letter to the Police Department with any supporting documents at:

Sacramento Police Department  
Alarm Unit  
5770 Freeport Blvd, Ste 100  
Sacramento, CA 95822

## Major Causes of False Alarms

### Human Error

- 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 opening 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 the alarm make sure all phones are on the hook and wait for your alarm company to call you.
- Motion detector alarms -- be aware of what can cause motion detector alarms: helium balloons (especially Mylar), pets, rodents, 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 is no door or window warping and check weathering of security screens.
- Duress codes -- will turn off the system but sends a special emergency message to your monitoring center.
- Bypassing Zones -- know how to "bypass" (turn off) the motion detector when you are home. Know how to turn off a malfunctioning component (zone) until repair is complete.
- 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 number 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.