The False Alarm Dilemma

Police Responses to Security System Alarms



Legitimate Emergencies

False Alarms

Case Study: Security Alarm Calls in Seattle



Total Alarm Calls

False Alarms are Expensive

In 2002, false alarms cost \$\Delta \Lambda \Lambda \text{\$\frac{1}{2}\text{\$\frac{1}\text{\$\frac{1}{2}\text{\$\frac{1}\text{\$\frac{1}{2}\text{\$\frac{1}\text{\$\frac{1}\text{\$\frac{1}{2}\text{\$\frac{1}\text{\$\frac



adjusted cost per arrested burglar to \$31,444.

In Seattle, wasted resources on false alarms increased the

and learn how to prevent false alarms from happening.

These costs can decrease if you can spot the common reasons for false alarms



False alarms happen for a variety of reasons, but most are caused by natural human

Top 6 Causes of False Alarms

mistakes. In fact, the False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA) reports that more than 80% of false alarms are caused by user errors that could easily be prevented2.

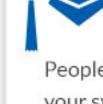


User mistakes like entering the

& Disarming

Improper Arming

wrong passcode and letting too much time pass before entering the code can prompt false alarms.



People who are unfamiliar with your system, such as cleaning

Not Properly Training

Authorized Users

crews, repairmen, pet sitters, house sitters, babysitters, etc., often cause false alarms. Typical mistakes include incorrectly entering the passcode and not being aware of sensor locations.



Power Problems

to have your system running on a battery backup so you don't have to worry about a false alarm caused by power problems.

can set off your alarm. It is important



Pets

motion sensors, and set off the alarm.

while you're away can be detected by



Not fully closing doors and windows before setting the alarm can prompt

Failing to Secure Doors

& Windows Properly

the system to go off. Also, faulty or loose contacts on your windows or doors can trigger false alarms. In fact, any external elements that get in through loose cracks on doors or windows, like rain or wind, can set off alarms.



trigger the sensors and set off the alarm.

Many cities are starting to issue fines to homeowners who cause unwarranted alarm dispatches. On average, these false alarms can cost homeowners \$50 - \$250 per incident3. Minimizing false alarms will

help reduce costs for everyone and keep police available for real emergencies.

5 Easy Ways to Prevent False Alarms

Here are five easy ways you can prevent false alarms in your home.

1. Place Sensors in Proper Places



sensors when your alarm is set.

2. Properly Train All Users

Properly train everyone, whether it's your kids, a babysitter, a relative, or yourself, to arm and disarm

your system properly. The most effective way to train them is to explain how the system works,

demonstrate it yourself, and then have them arm and disarm the system multiple times under your

Turn sensors away from air/heat vents, fans, and windows so they don't pick up any breezes or drafts

that could prompt a false alarm. Additionally, make sure you keep all moving objects away from the



supervision.

3. Equipment Checkups Make sure you schedule regular inspections of your security system equipment a few times each year

to ensure it is still running properly. Alarm monitoring companies can even set up annual tests to make

sure signals are transmitting properly. If you have glass-break detectors, make sure they are adjusted

properly so they aren't set off by loud noises, like thunder. Also, check the battery backup-low



batteries are the second most common cause of false alarms.

4. Secure Your Doors and Windows Have a professional technician check your system at least once a year to ensure you don't have any broken sensor connections or loose-fitting doors or windows. Also, make sure you close and lock all your doors and windows before you set the alarm.



5. Pet Friendly Sensors There are motion sensors that are immune to movement caused by pets up to 80 pounds. If you have

household pets that roam the house while you're away, these sensors are worth the investment.

1. Reset Your System: When your alarm is going off, enter your security code into the alarm control panel

2. Communicate With Your Security Provider:

What to Do When Accidents Happen

authorities from having to respond to a false alarm at your home.

If you do accidently set off your alarm, don't panic. There are simple things you can do to prevent local

to disarm the system and stop the alarm as quickly as possible.



ENTER CODE:

3. Do NOT Call 911:

Never contact your local emergency services about a false alarm. If you have a false

Make sure you are prepared to talk with a representative from your alarm company.

Give your password or ID number. Do not leave home until you have talked with them.



4. Set Up Phone Notifications: When you set up notifications with your service provider, have them call two phones

alarm, only contact the security system provider.

before alerting authorities. This way, you are more likely to speak with them before they unnecessarily contact the police, an ambulance, or the fire department.



5. Review Your System:

Accidents happen, but take measures to prevent the same mistake from happening twice. Make the necessary changes to ensure whatever triggered your false alarm the first time won't happen a second time.



Help Others Prevent False Alarms

Share this reference guide for preventing false alarms with your family, friends, and neighbors.

faraonline.org/files/2012/05/Patrol-Officer-Bulletin.pdf copy www.lapdonline.org/faqs/content_basic_view/9162