TIPS FOR BUSINESSES

1. Be sure all employees are thoroughly trained before attempting to use the alarm system. *Hold monthly training sessions* to ensure alarm users are aware of: any changes to the system, the importance of careful pre-arming checks, designated entry/exit doors, proper opening/closing procedures, correct pass codes and arming codes, and rehearse how to cancel accidental activations.

2. Watch out for holiday-related false alarms: thoroughly train temporary holiday employees, watch last minute schedule changes leading to inexperienced employees arming or disarming your system, be careful with the placement of seasonal decorations, long hours and/or holiday parties can result in careless use of your alarm system by employees.

3. Look for items that can move within the "view" of your motion detectors, causing false alarms (fans, heaters, hanging signs, fax machines, decorations, balloons, curtains, plants, pets, etc.)

4. Confirm that special consideration has been given to the installation of motion detectors in high bay areas with overhead doors, large exhaust fans or ceiling vents, which allow entry of birds. Discuss with your alarm provider whether your location's environment requires specially designed and installed motion detectors that will not false due to birds, wildlife, rodents, cats, etc.

5. Ensure all doors and windows are secure and locked before arming your system.

6. Ensure that floor mounted contacts are not being used on overhead/rollup doors. Instead, use track-mounted wide gap contacts by placing a track-mounted contact on BOTH sides of the door tracks at 4-5 feet on one side and at 7-8 feet on the other side. Require that BOTH contacts must be activated to trigger the alarm. This will reduce and/or eliminate false alarms due to wind or shaking of the door. Have your alarm provider check the type and condition of contacts installed on your overhead doors.

7. Don't change pass codes without advising your central monitoring station.

8. Don't change pass codes and arming codes without advising the appropriate authorized users.

9. Train new users thoroughly, notifying your monitoring station of new authorized users.

10. Your central monitoring station should not request a law enforcement dispatch for power outages, low battery signals or loss of telephone connections.

11. If you believe your alarm system is not working properly, immediately contact your alarm provider.

12. Service and maintain your system (including batteries) regularly before false alarms occur.

13. If your business requires wireless hold-up protection, use dual-action devices only.

14. Replace old law enforcement direct-connect monitoring equipment with newer, high security monitoring technology. *Dirty or wet phone lines, telephone repairmen and service interruptions do not require law enforcement response!*

15. Upgrade old alarm systems to current equipment conforming to Security Industry Association (SIA) false alarm prevention standards.

Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Professionals

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FALSE ALARM PREVENTION FOR BUSINESSES

What Do False Alarms Cost YOUR Business?

- False Alarms Cost System Users $$$
- False Alarms Waste Valuable Law Enforcement Resources
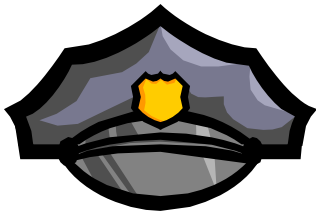- "Crying Wolf" Can Delay Response When You Really Need It

THE HIDDEN COSTS OF FALSE ALARMS

- Are you operating under the assumption that false alarms are just another "cost of doing business"?

- Do you think every commercial institution is always entitled to unlimited law enforcement response?

- Are you at risk when officers are used to responding to chronic false alarms and a real emergency happens at your facility?

The reality is that patrol resources are limited and should never be wasted. Thousands of patrol hours are spent investigating alarm reports that turn out to be "false alarms."

Alarm companies and alarm users must be responsible for the use and maintenance of alarm systems to help assure prompt law enforcement response when an emergency really does exist.
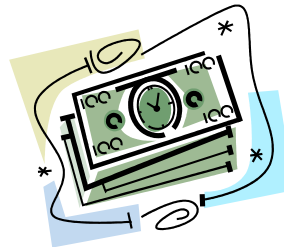
FARA, working with state and national alarm associations, has been studying the false alarm problem and solutions for some time. Working with law enforcement and the business community, there is documented proof that response to false alarms can be dramatically reduced.

Commercial establishments share unique circumstances often contributing to the overall false alarm problem. These circumstances include frequent employee turnover, constant public access, daily opening and closing procedures, working with multiple goods and service providers, and use of janitorial services.

BUSINESSES CAN CONTROL THE HIDDEN COSTS OF FALSE ALARMS

1. Identify the magnitude of your problem and "The Hidden Costs" will quickly become visible.

- What do you pay in false alarm fines?
- Which locations generate the most false alarms?
- Does someone involved in upper management approve payment of the fines?

2. Talk to your alarm provider and become re-educated in the design and use of YOUR security system.

- Does your alarm system identify the device that caused the alarm activation?
- Is equipment installed to make activation easy when needed, but safe from accidental trips?
- Is there a way to cancel response on an accidental activation?
- Do you use internal verification procedures where, upon an alarm activation (including robbery, hold-up, duress or panic alarms), the monitoring operator contacts your location to obtain a code word confirming or discounting the alarm activation **prior to** requesting law enforcement dispatch?
- Does your monitoring company use Enhanced Call Verification (ECV), which means that if they receive no answer at the alarm site, they call a responsible party's or authorized user's cell phone prior to requesting law enforcement dispatch?
- Are all employees fully trained in the use of the equipment?
- Are the problems occurring during specific opening and/or closing times?