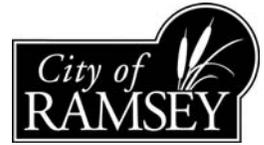


FALSE ALARM PREVENTION

FOR HOMEOWNERS



UNDERSTANDING FALSE ALARMS

- **Did you know that the three major causes of residential false alarms are:**
 1. Use errors
 2. Installation or service errors; and
 3. Equipment failures
- **Did you know that more than 80% of false alarms are related to preventable user errors?**
- **Did you know that 20% of alarm users cause 80% of all false alarms?**
- **Do you think you are at greater risk when officers, accustomed to responding to chronic false alarms, respond to a real emergency at your location?**

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.***

WHAT IS A FALSE ALARM?

A false alarm is notification of an alarm to law enforcement when the responding authority finds no evidence of an attempted or criminal offense.

COMMON CAUSES OF FALSE ALARMS

1. Inadequate training of people allowed access to your security system (children, neighbors, cleaning personnel, real estate agents, guests, relatives, babysitters, etc.)
2. Weak system batteries.
3. Open, unlocked or loose fitting doors and windows.
4. Drafts from heaters and air conditioning systems that move plants, curtains, balloons, etc.
5. Wandering pets.

FALSE ALARMS

- Take officers and fire fighters away from real emergencies. This embarrassing situation endangers responding authorities and the whole community by needlessly diverting public safety resources.
- Desensitizes communities to actual incidents of crime and fire and can lead to neighbors ignoring your alarm when it goes off.
- Makes your security system less reliable and credible.
- May make you reluctant to arm your system, exposing your home and property to undetected theft or fire.
- Cost citizens time, personal security and money, as many jurisdictions assess costly fines for excessive false alarms.

INSTALLING & ACTIVATING AN ALARM SYSTEM

- When purchasing an alarm system, you must remember that you are a vital part of the alarm function. You must completely understand how the system works, what it does and does not do, and what you must do to keep it in proper operating condition.
- Ensure all users of your system are provided adequate and thorough instruction on using and testing the system. Ask your alarm company to provide you with written instructions, as well as give you a physical demonstration.
- Ensure outside audible alarms are set to sound for no more than 10 minutes before resetting.

HOW CAN YOU PREVENT FALSE ALARM?

1. BEFORE ACTIVATING YOUR ALARM SYSTEM . . .

- a. Lock all protected doors and windows.
- b. Keep pets, balloons, fans, heaters, plants, curtains, seasonal decorations, etc. away from motion sensor areas.
- c. Know how to cancel the alarm if the system activates.

2. EDUCATE ALARM SYSTEM USERS.

- a. All users, key holders or any person with legal access to your property must be thoroughly trained in how to operate your system, including knowledge of correct arming codes, pass codes, telephone numbers and procedures for cancelling accidental alarm activations.

3. NOTIFY YOUR SECURITY COMPANY IF:

- a. You think your system isn't working properly.
- b. You plan any remodeling, including replacing doors or windows, hanging drywall, sanding floors, installing attic flooring or basement ceiling, changing phone systems, installing DSL, VoIP, FIOS or intercoms, siding, ceiling fans or skylights, fumigating, installing wiring for cable or other electronics, installing anything near the system control panel or keypads.
- c. You hire domestic help, get a new pet, plan to sell your house, or are testing your system.

4. HAVE YOUR SECURITY COMPANY CHECK AND SERVICE YOUR SYSTEM REGULARLY. Routine maintenance can help prevent many false alarms.

5. YOUR CENTRAL MONITORING STATION SHOULD NOT REQUEST A LAW ENFORCEMENT DISPATCH FOR POWER OUTAGES, LOW BATTERY SIGNALS OR LOSS OF TELEPHONE CONNECTIONS.

6. REQUEST THAT YOUR MONITORING COMPANY USE ENHANCED CALL VERIFICATION (ECV) WHEN YOUR ALARM ACTIVATES. This 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 a law enforcement dispatch.

7. DIRTY OR WET PHONE LINES, TELEPHONE REPAIRMEN AND SERVICE INTERRUPTIONS DO NOT REQUIRE LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE!

8. UPGRADE OLD ALARM SYSTEM TO CURRENT EQUIPMENT. Conforming to Security Industry Association (SIA) false alarm prevention standards.

Source: False Alarm Reduction Association (www.faraonline.org)