



FALSE ALARM REDUCTION PROGRAM

The Farmers Branch Police Department responds to nearly 3012 false alarm calls a year. False alarms cost the City of Farmers Branch and its citizens thousands of dollars per year and can take officers away from actual emergencies. To prevent unnecessary emergency response to false alarms, City ordinance 2519 was adopted to encourage all alarm users to properly use their alarm system and maintain its mechanical reliability.

Alarm users are required to register their alarm systems with the City of Farmers Branch.

Annual Permit Fee

- ▶ Commercial and Residential -\$30.00
- ▶ It is a violation of law, punishable by a fine up to \$200.00 for each day a violation exists, to operate an alarm system without being permitted by the City of Farmers Branch.

Definition of a false alarm: When a responding officer finds that no criminal offense has taken place.

Alarm users are not assessed a fee for their first five (5) false alarm of their current registration period. Fees are assessed for subsequent alarms within the registration period.

False Alarm Service Fees are:

- ▶ First five false alarms: **No Charge**
- ▶ Sixth or more false alarm: **\$50.00**

What Can You Do To Prevent False Alarms?

- Instruct all alarm users on the proper operation of your alarm system
- Secure all windows & doors before activation
- Know and rehearse the process to cancel an accidental alarm
- Notify your alarm company of any changes in responsible parties or problems with your system immediately
- Have your system checked annually by your alarm company

Some Common Problems That Cause False Alarms:

- Weak alarm system backup batteries
- Open, unlocked, or loose fitting doors and windows
- Helium-filled balloons trigger motion detectors
- Wandering pets trigger motion detectors
- Improper application or installation of motion detectors
- Failure to properly train other users



FALSE ALARM REDUCTION PROGRAM

Additional Information

- Do not call 911 to cancel your alarm. Only your alarm monitoring center can cancel the alarm dispatch request.
- Alarms caused by severe weather such as earthquakes, tornadoes and power outages lasting at least four hours will not be counted as a false alarm.
- Failure to pay your False Alarm Service Fee within 30 days of notice shall result in suspension of the alarm permit.
- Operation of a suspended alarm system will result in a citation being issued to the permit holder each time an alarm is received while that alarm permit is suspended.
- Fine for operating a suspended alarm is \$200.00
- Changes in the permit status or contact information must be reported to the Police Department within ten (10) days. This is especially important if you move, cancel your alarm service or cease to operate at a particular location.

The City of Farmers Branch has contracted with Alarm Tracking and Billing Services (ATB Services) which has expertise in administering false alarm reduction programs. It would be cost prohibitive for the City to build, operate, and maintain a false alarm tracking and billing system.

Alarm Tracking and Billing Services Duties

They are to track and bill for an estimated 647 yearly false alarms; coordinate with approximately 120 alarm companies and monitoring centers in and out of State; process 2,500 annual permits; provide all the computer software and upgrades required; create online sites for City officials, alarm users and alarm companies to review their respective alarm information; handle all alarm suspensions and reinstatements; process all remittances paid; assist with the appeal filing; provide for online payment ability; accommodate alarm users with a toll-free customer service support; and develop an educational online alarm school to help reduce the number of false alarms that requires a police response. All owners of alarm systems will receive an initial registration notice on behalf of the City from Alarm Tracking and Billing Services.

When you purchase a private security alarm system or contract to have a private security system monitored by a security alarm business licensed by the City you are entering into a private contract with that business only. Your security alarm purchase and/or monitoring contract is not a contract with the City of Farmers Branch, its Police Department or with any other law enforcement agency.