

Most common alarm errors and how to prevent false alarms

False alarms in Pierce County are a problem. They can divert officers from locations where they're genuinely needed. They remove deputies from proactive crime prevention efforts. Avoiding the common errors in using your alarm system can reduce false alarms and saves you money.

Alarm System Maintenance

- Know how your system works. Check with your alarm company if you have questions. If you have misplaced the operations manual, ask your alarm company for a copy.
- Schedule regular maintenance checks by your alarm company; they can help prevent equipment problems and provide valuable on site training.
- Test the system according to the frequency suggested by the alarm company. Change the back up batteries every 3 to 5 years or earlier if you have experienced long power outages. Check your batteries on wireless alarm systems.
- Have the system's sensors properly set for all door and window contacts, pets, balloons, hanging decorations and air heating/AC systems.
- If high winds and storms have caused a false alarm, have your alarm company readjust your sensors or upgrade your alarm sensors.
- Notify your alarm company if you add DSL, VoIP, call waiting, fax line, change your direct phone lines or add new walls or remove walls.
- The technologies in alarm equipment have advanced tremendously in the past few years; check with your alarm company to take advantage of new systems.

User Error

- The vast majority of false alarms are caused by user error.
- Everyone who has a key to your home or business needs to know how to operate the system and how to cancel an alarm with their password.
- Typical persons causing false alarms are your children, neighbors, house sitters, new employees, cleaning crews, real estate agents, delivery personnel and contractors; either they did not have the code or did not know how to properly operate the system.
- Failure to shut interior doors to control pets can cause false alarms. Doors and windows not properly locked can be blown open during wind storms. False alarms can also occur because of after hours deliveries or when businesses fail to lock a closed door and then a customer opens it.
- Exit and re-enter with a time delay. Once you exit, you must disarm the system to re-enter if you forgot something inside. The exit time delay allows for only one exit before it arms the system.
- Notify your alarm monitoring company immediately of all changes in responsible parties and/or phone contact numbers. This can help prevent a false alarm call and is extremely important during emergency contact notifications.
- Keep the 24 hour phone number of your monitoring company handy. You cannot cancel an activated alarm by calling 9-1-1; only your alarm company can cancel the alarm.