

Tips for Reducing Alarms

Here are a few tips that may prevent or reduce false alarms:

- Make sure everyone is familiar with the alarm system operations.
- Secure doors and windows before turning on the system.
- Be aware of changes in the environment (new animals, design changes, seasonal decorations and plants).
- Notify monitoring facility of any and all changes (house guest, name changes, new employees, and terminations of employees).
- Routinely inspect and maintain alarm equipment by both the alarm users and qualified inspection personnel (check all contacts and routinely dust motion detectors where spiders like to live).
- Please be aware that cleaning and repair crews working on your alarm system may cause false alarms and you, as the alarm user, will be responsible for any false alarm charges.
- Check for drafts that may move curtains, plants or hanging objects

False Alarm Reduction Program
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Rev: 9-11-2014

Response Fees

The Baltimore City Police Department hopes that no alarm user ever experiences a false alarm and provides one “free” response to false activations in a 365-day period. Beginning on the second and subsequent responses, the user will be assessed a false alarm occurrence fee as indicated below:

2 nd or 3 rd	\$50
4 th	\$100
5 th	\$150
6 th	\$200
7 th	\$250
8 th	\$300
9 th	\$350
10 th	\$400
11 th	\$450
12 th and above, for residential users	\$500
12 th , 13 th , 14 th , for Non- Residential	\$1,000
15 th and above, for Non-Residential	\$2,000

Waivers

One false alarm occurrence fee will be waived if the alarm user has the alarm system inspected by the registered alarm company certification that the alarm system has been inspected and is functioning properly. If a fee is waived and additional false activations occur that fee will be assessed as if the previous fee has not been waived.

Citations Fees

Failure to Pay False Alarm Fee

- Residential Users \$100.00
- Non Residential Users \$500.00

Failure to Register

- Users \$100.00
- Contractors, Monitors, Others \$500.00

For More Information

This brochure is meant as a general summary, not a comprehensive guide, to all codes, rules, and regulations related to false alarms. For more information, please see Art. 19, 8-1 of Baltimore City Code, or visit our website at www.baltimorehousing.org.

City of Baltimore



FALSE ALARM REDUCTION PROGRAM





False Alarms

False Alarm Activations are major public safety concern.

The Baltimore Police Department responded to **21,672 False Alarms in 2013**. False alarms are a waste of valuable officer resources. False Alarms are costly and dangerous because they divert officers from true crime prevention and delay response to real emergencies.

To discourage repeated false alarms, the Police Department established a program to:

- Register all burglar alarm systems in the City.
- Track the occurrence of alarms.
- Administer a tiered system of false alarm occurrence fines that will be imposed on residents and businesses experiencing excessive false alarms.

The False Alarm Reduction Program

The False Alarm Reduction Program was created to administer the City's false alarm reduction legislation. The program's main function is to reduce the number of false alarms that officers respond to each year.

The False Alarm Reduction Program registers alarm companies {contractors, monitors and installers} to prevent excessive false alarms in accordance with the legislation.

What is a False Alarm?

A false alarm is defined as any alarm signal that elicits a response by officers and for which there is no evidence of criminal activity to justify an officer response. That simply means that if an officer responds to an alarm signal and, after investigation, finds no evidence that criminal activity either had occurred or was occurring, the officers will designate the alarm signal as a false alarm. A false alarm may be caused by factors such as human error or equipment malfunction.



Alarm User Guidelines

As the user of the alarm, there are some guidelines to follow that may assist you in helping to reduce the number of false alarms generated by your alarm system:

- Use a licensed contractor trained in alarm system installation.
- Be sure the family and authorized users are trained in operating the alarm system. The licensed contractor installing your equipment should provide this training, along with instructional materials.
- Implement and use a regular system maintenance schedule.
- Develop a verification process with your alarm service company. **Baltimore City requires two-call verification prior to contacting the police.**
- Have your system checked by a trained alarm technician when false alarms are generated.

Your Alarm System

The alarm system you choose should have the following items incorporated/ included with the alarm:

- Underwriters Laboratories (UL) OR Factory Mutual (FM)
- An automatic entry and exit delay system.
- Test-system that allows users to test the system internally for malfunctions.
- A surge protector to prevent power outages due to harsh weather conditions
- Backup power or battery system that prevents activations in a power outage.

Alarm User Registration

All Alarm users are required to register their alarm systems.

- All alarm users must register their alarm systems with the False Alarm Reduction Program within ten days of activation. Registration does not apply to car or medical alert alarm systems.
- Registrations can be completed online at www.baltimorehousing.org
- There is no fee for users to register.
- Alarm Registrations are not transferable from one alarm user to another or from one location to another.
- Alarm users are responsible for keeping personal contact and monitoring company information accurate and up to date. Users must obtain and provide their registration number to the alarm/monitoring company.