

Helpful Hints to Avoid False Alarms City of Plantation Police Department

Over the past few years, more residents and businesses have been protecting their homes and property from burglary and fire damage. We are proud that everyone is taking a more active role in protecting themselves and their community. Unfortunately, the lack of alarm system education and system misuse are having a significant impact upon our Protective Service Departments.

The Police Department responds to approximately 1,000 false alarms each month. For each call, two officers will respond for nearly 45 minutes. Annually over 18,000 hours of Police patrol is incurred answering false alarms at a cost of over \$375,000.

The Fire Department responds to 80 false alarms each month. The annual rate of false alarms is 962, of which 590 are system malfunctions. The average cost for the Fire Department to respond to a single false alarm is over \$300. The annual cost for the City is about \$290,000.

There have been an extraordinary number of false alarms in Plantation. The City is asking its residents and businesses to help reduce this problem by following these helpful hints to avoid false alarms. Together, we will provide for a better and safer community.

How to Avoid False Alarms

Commercial & Multi-Family Complexes

1. Have your fire alarm system serviced once a year by a State of Florida Licensed Fire Alarm Technician.
2. Have all detectors cleaned and re-sensitized every two (2) years.
3. Provide U.L. rated pull station covers.
4. Have duct detectors send a supervisory message rather than sound the general fire alarm throughout the building.
5. Keep an alarm service record book and plans of the system.
6. Do not reset the fire alarm system. Let the Fire Department do this operation.
7. Cover smoke detectors when doing any building repairs or major cleaning.
8. Put your fire alarm in test mode when doing repairs.
9. Clean out air conditioning ducts, etc.

Single Family Fire Alarm System

1. Have your fire alarm system serviced annually.
2. Have smoke detectors cleaned and re-sensitized annually.
3. Do not place smoke detectors close to cooking and showering areas.
4. Change the battery annually.
5. Cover smoke detectors during construction, building repairs and major cleaning.
6. Write down what caused the false alarm. Then notify the alarm company for any necessary repairs.

How to Avoid False Burglar Alarms

1. Have a State certified and competent professional install your system.
2. Obtain an alarm permit for any type of audible alarm system.
3. Test the battery back-up on a semi-annual basis.
4. Have the system provider regularly check and maintain the alarm system.
5. Carefully review the operating procedures and have the alarm provider explain any information that is unclear.
6. Keep all doors, windows and other openings locked at all times whether you are home or not. This will ensure that you are safe and that the wind or a pet does not accidentally push the door open.
7. Keep any objects such as coats, curtains, etc. away from the doorways and windows so they do not prevent the door or window from fully closing.
8. Teach the alarm instructions to anyone who uses the alarm and give them the password in case a mistake occurs. Note, please do not write your access code numbers or password down where a person can easily retrieve them.
9. Ensure that the sensitivity level is set high enough that it cannot accidentally go off when there is inclement weather.
10. Test the system periodically. Do not test the system without first alerting the alarm company of the date and time.
11. Have a reliable neighbor or relative watch over your house and be the contact for the system provider or police when you are out of town.