



## FALSE ALARM FAQs AND PREVENTION TIPS

### Do I need an alarm permit?

Yes, permits are required for all residential and commercial monitored and/or audible burglar or fire alarms. As a courtesy, many alarm companies will give verbal or written notice of the required alarm permit upon installation, although they are not required to.

### How much is a permit and how do I get one?

Permits are \$10.00 annually and must be obtained within seven days of the alarm system becoming operational. (SRC 3-32) Permit applications are available through the City of Scottsdale Business Services website: [Visit ScottsdaleAZ.gov](http://VisitScottsdaleAZ.gov), search "alarms" .

### What is a false alarm?

An activation of an alarm system that results in public safety personnel being sent to the location where the alarm is going off with no evidence, at the location, of a crime or emergency is determined by public safety personnel.

On average, **66%** of alarms reported to the Scottsdale Police Department result in a False Alarm classification. Less than **0.5%** of alarms are the result of a valid crime having occurred, with a Police Report being generated. Other alarm classifications include alarms cancelled by the alarm company prior to officer arrival and activations that were unavoidable by the owner.

### How much is a False Alarm - Service Charge?

- If you **have** a valid alarm permit the first two (2) false alarms in a license year are FREE of charge, the third is \$50, the fourth is \$75, the fifth and sixth are \$100 each, and the seventh or more are \$200 each.
- If you **do not** have a valid alarm permit there is an additional \$50 service charge per activation. The first two false activations are \$50 each, third is \$100, fourth is \$125,

fifth and sixth are \$150 each, and seventh or more are \$250 each. When you receive the notification of a false alarm and subsequent service charge a permit number will be automatically generated. The permit will not be active until the fee is paid.

- Permits are valid for one year. False alarm charges will begin again with the renewal of the permit.
  - Notices to renew permits are sent five (5) weeks prior to permit expiration.
  - If a permit is not renewed, an additional \$50 per activation service charge will be assessed.

### **What happens if I do not pay the False Alarm Service Charge?**

Payment is due 30 days from the activation date before delinquent fees are assessed. If your service charges are not paid, your permit will not be active and additional penalty charges can be assessed.

### **I moved and I am still being billed for false alarms.**

You must contact the City of Scottsdale Business Services department in writing (mail, email, fax) with a specific date if you are moving from a residence or business with an alarm. The permit will not be cancelled until written notice is received and you will be responsible for any false alarms that occur until you cancel your permit.

### **Are the alarm permits transferrable?**

No, you cannot transfer a permit from one location to another or from one person to another. Written notice must be given to the City of Scottsdale Business Services department to cancel your alarm permit. A new permit application must be completed for the new location.

### **How do I get a Waiver Certificate?**

After reviewing this document, you are eligible to take the Alarm Awareness Questionnaire. Upon the completion of the questionnaire with an 80% or better you will receive a certificate that you can present to Business Services to request a waiver that is good for **one** outstanding service charge.

- Waiver certificates must be used within one year from the date of issue, only one waiver per permit number can be used per permit year. The waiver certificate is valid for one service charge, it does not cover late charges or charges for not having a permit.
- Only one waiver certificate can be obtained per permit user per year. Two attempts to obtain an 80% or higher on the questionnaire will be permitted.

### **What should I do when my alarm goes off accidentally?**

Immediately notify your alarm company and have your password/passcode readily available to cancel the alarm. Do not call the Police as they do not know the password/passcode you registered with your alarm company.

### **What should I do if I receive a false alarm notification, but the alarm was valid?**

If your alarm was activated and police responded but did not find any signs of criminal activity, the alarm will be considered false. If you later learn the alarm was valid and a crime occurred, contact Scottsdale Police to file a police report immediately. You can then contact the City of Scottsdale Business Services department and notify them of the valid alarm and provide the police report number.

### **What if I received a false alarm notice but my alarm company did not call the Police Department?**

Scottsdale Police can verify how they were notified of the alarm. Please contact Scottsdale PD records Department at 480-312-1999 to obtain a copy of the Call for Service.

### **What if I received a false alarm notice but did not see the Police at my residence?**

If you do not know if the police responded to your false alarm you can call and verify when Officers arrived and what their findings were. Please contact Scottsdale PD Records Department at 480-312-1999 to obtain a copy of the Call for Service.

### **Why are false alarms a problem?**

The Scottsdale Police respond to thousands of false alarms every year. Responding to these calls divert police resources and can delay police response to other reports of crime.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

On average, the Scottsdale Police Department spends more than **3,100 hours** each year responding to FALSE alarms.

### **What can I do to help prevent false alarms?**

- Know how to use your alarm system. Your alarm company should provide an orientation and training.
  - One of the most common causes of false alarms is user error. If you do not understand, or have questions regarding the use of your system, contact your alarm company immediately.
  - Know your alarm company's cancellation procedure. This will prepare you in the event of a false alarm.
- Train anyone who has a key/access to the residence or business on how to use the alarm system.

- Keep all users updated on changes and updates to your system or to your passwords/codes.
- Keep your alarm company updated with changes such as new phone numbers, new/past user information, remodeling timelines, if you are moving, and if you are adding a pet.
  - Keeping information (i.e. phone numbers) updated. This will allow the alarm company to easily get in contact with the correct person in the event of a false alarm.
  - Keeping user information up to date will ensure past users are not able to cancel an alarm and new or temporary users, such as contractors, are able to cancel an alarm.
  - If adding a pet, motion sensors (if applicable) can be adjusted so they are “pet-friendly” and should not cause a false alarm.
- Inspect your system to ensure all door and window sensors are securely attached and the system is working properly. Your alarm company can also perform inspections or regular maintenance to ensure the system is working properly.
  - **DO NOT INTENTIONALLY SET THE ALARM OFF IN AN ATTEMPT TO TEST IT**
    - If you believe the system is not working properly, call your alarm company to come and perform an inspection to ensure it is working correctly.
- Ensure motion sensors are regularly cleaned and decorations, plants, and/or pets will not set them off.
- Double check all doors and windows to ensure that all are closed tight and locked.
- Know your cancellation password/passcode.
- Call your alarm company immediately after an accidental activation to cancel the alarm.
- Make sure panic buttons are not accessible to children and are in a location so that they are not accidentally activated.
- In the event of a false alarm, find out what caused it and take steps to ensure it does not happen again.

**City of Scottsdale – Business Services**

7447 E. Indian School Rd. Suite 110  
 Scottsdale, AZ 85251  
 480-312-7400

**Scottsdale Police Department**

8401 E Indian School Rd  
 Scottsdale, AZ 85251  
 480-312-5000 (non-emergency)