



You Can Help Prevent False Fire Alarms!

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In recent years, the Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) responded to 4,500 false alarm calls per year. With limited resources and demand on service, false alarms need to be looked at to prevent waste and abuse. A false alarm is the activation of any alarm caused by the carelessness or intentional misuse of the system, and not caused by heat, smoke, or fire that results in the response of fire department personnel. This information is provided to assist you in preventing false alarms.

FALSE ALARM EFFECTS

Did you know a false alarm causes people to ignore a real alarm? False alarms could have the following effect:

- Disrupt workers and their productivity.
- Take firefighters and law enforcement officers away from real emergencies. This serious situation can put firefighters in danger as well as the whole community, and it wastes public resources.
- Desensitizes the community to actual fire events.
- Can lead to employees and customers ignoring your fire alarm when it activates, making your system less reliable and credible.
- May tempt you to disarm your system, exposing your property to undetected fires.
- Cost citizens/businesses time, personal security, and money due to costly false alarm fees for excessive false alarms.



PREVENT FALSE ALARMS

You can prevent false alarms through the following ways:

- Educate all of your alarm users - including everyone who has access to your business - on complete system operation procedures.
- Try and eliminate any possible causes that will lead to a false alarm.
- Review alarm cancellation procedures with anyone who has access to the alarm site.
- Update your contact information annually.
- Notify your alarm company when phone numbers or situations change.
- Have fire alarm system instructions readily available in case of accidental alarm activation.
- Do not perform cutting, welding, dusting, or painting operations near smoke alarms unless they are protected.



FIRE ALARM MALFUNCTION

The activation of any alarm that results in the response of the fire department and is caused by the following could result in a false alarm fee:

- Mechanical failure
- Malfunction
- Improper installation
- Lack of proper maintenance



To avoid monetary fees, make sure that your fire alarm service personnel are able to do the things listed below:

- Be qualified and experienced in the inspection, testing, and maintenance of fire alarm systems.
- Maintain fire alarm system equipment in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- Place the fire alarm system in test mode prior to testing the system.
- Keep the fire alarm system equipment clean and smoke alarms free of dust and bugs.
- Make sure devices are in their proper locations
- Schedule a service call if the fire alarm system is not working properly as well as replace the systems that are damaged or not operating the correct way.

FALSE ALARM FEES

Fees will be based on the number of occurrences within a billing cycle. There are two billing cycles per year. The first cycle is January through June, and the second cycle is July through December.

False Alarms	Penalty Amount
1st	None
2nd	\$100
3rd	\$250
4th	\$500
5th or more	\$1,000 each

Use your money wisely -- make repairs to your fire alarm system, eliminate false alarm activations, and avoid false alarm penalties. For more information visit www.ocfa.org.

