

## About the Alarm Ordinance

The City of Sandy alarm ordinance was enacted to help reduce the number of false alarms that the Sandy Police Department receives. Currently, **over 98%** of all burglary and robbery alarms prove false. Patrol units are dispatched to *all alarms*. The hours and resources used during responses to unfounded false alarms is a burden on resources.

Neighboring counties and cities utilizing similar alarm ordinances have experienced greatly reduced numbers of false alarms within their jurisdictions. This results in patrol officers being more available to meet other requests for service.

## Alarm Registration Fees

- Residential: **\$20**
- Residential with primary resident 65 or older: **No charge\***
- Business: **\$50**
- Government Buildings: **No charge**

**\*A primary resident age 65 years or older is exempt from the permit fee. They are however, still required to have permit on file at the Sandy Police Department.**

The ordinance provides for an **additional penalty fee of \$75** if the alarm user fails to obtain a permit with the Sandy Police Department *within 30 days* after the installation of an alarm system.

## Permit Term

The alarm permit is valid for a 12-month period beginning on the date of issuance as stated on the permit.

## Permit Renewal

Renewal notices are mailed approximately one month prior to the permit expiration date. The permit holder is responsible for submitting the applicable renewal fee and any account information updates to the Sandy Police Department on or before the expiration date.

## False Alarm Fines & Additional Fees

- 1st False Alarm: No Charge
- 2nd False Alarm: \$50
- 3rd False Alarm: \$100
- 4th False Alarm: \$150
- Failure to obtain a permit: \$75

## False Alarms, Permit Suspension and Appeals

• The ordinance allows up to four (4) false alarms during the one year permit period. Receiving a fourth false alarm shall be cause to suspend the alarm permit for one year from the date of the last false alarm. A Notice of Suspension, which unless appealed in accordance with the alarm chapter, will be effective and final on the date of mailing without further notice.

• An appeal of a Notice of Suspension of an alarm permit may be made by the permit applicant. This appeal must be received by the Sandy Police Department within 14 days from the date of mailing of the notice.

• Please see Chapter 9.07 of the Sandy Municipal Code for more detail.

## What is a False Alarm?

The City of Sandy Alarm Ordinance defines a false alarm as **"an alarm signal eliciting a response by emergency services when a situation requiring a response does not in fact exist."**

# Common Causes of False Alarms

## RESIDENTIAL:

- Inadequate training of all those allowed access to your alarm system.
- Domestic help, house cleaners, contractors, realtors, lawn care workers, extended family members and pet sitters.
- Weak or depleted system batteries. Usual battery life is about 3-5 years.
- Open, unlocked, loose fitting or defective doors/windows.
- Drafts from heaters/air conditioning systems and open windows move plants, curtains, balloons etc.
- Wandering unconfined pets.
- Barking dogs can activate "glass break" detectors.

## AT YOUR BUSINESS:

- Banners or signs and seasonal decorations.
- Cleaning crews.
- Mylar balloons.
- Plants or curtains caught in drafts.
- Stacked items such as boxes which may fall, setting off motion detectors.
- Unsupervised guests.

## What To Do If You Set Your Alarm Off Accidentally

- First, don't panic. Carefully disarm your system by entering your cancellation code slowly.
- Wait for your alarm company or central monitoring station to call, give your password. If the correct password is not given, the monitoring company will inform you that the alarm will be canceled, but they will then call dispatch to advise that the improper password was given. Make sure you know your password!
- Do not leave your home or business until you have talked with your monitoring station! DO NOT call 911 to cancel an alarm activation.

# False Alarm Prevention Tips

## FOR RESIDENTIAL ALARM USERS:

- Lock all doors and windows before activating your alarm system.
- Keep pets, balloons, fans, heaters, plants, curtains, seasonal decorations, etc. away from motion sensor areas.
- Ensure that there are no cobwebs or insects that could set off your system's motion detectors. If a spider or bug gets on the face of the motion detector, it can cause a false alarm.
- Educate all alarm system users and responders
  - Train them how to operate your system
  - All users should know the correct arming codes, pass codes, monitoring company phone number and procedure for canceling accidental alarm activations. If you give someone your key—train them to operate your alarm.
- Schedule a service call if the alarm is not working properly. Routine maintenance can help prevent many false alarms.
- Have the alarm battery changed every 3-5 years. They typically last about 4 hours in the event of a power outage. The life of the battery is shortened if you have had several power outages.
- Notify your security company if you install DSL, VoIP, FIOS or intercoms.

## FOR BUSINESSES:

- Fully train new system users. Hold monthly training sessions to teach proper operation and how to cancel accidental activations.
- Thoroughly train temporary holiday employees to avoid holiday-related false alarms.
- Look for items that can move within the 'view' of your motion detectors, causing false alarms.

- Ensure that floor mounted contacts are not being used on overhead/rollup doors. Track-mounted wide gap contacts on BOTH sides of the door should be used instead; BOTH contacts must be activated before an alarm is triggered.
- Don't change pass codes and/or arming codes without advising your authorized users. If a pass code is changed notify your alarm company.

## **For more Information / Links**

- **Outside link:** [False Alarm Reduction Association \(FARA\)](#) --

"Experienced emergency and industry professionals working together, on your behalf, to help to put an end to false alarms, wasted time and frustrated public servants."

- [Info on Home Alarm Sales Scams / Buying a Home Security System](#) (PDF format)

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Q. If my alarm company or I call dispatch to cancel before an officer arrives, is the alarm still considered a false alarm?**

**A.** No.

**Q. If my alarm goes off during severe windstorms, ice storms, major power outages or other conditions beyond my control will I be liable for the False Alarm?**

**A.** No -- a false alarm does not include an alarm signal caused by uncontrollable conditions of nature or other extraordinary circumstances.

**Q. If my children or pets set off the alarm when I am not at home, will I be charged for a false alarm?**

**A.** Yes -- you may be charged for the false alarm.

**Q. If my alarm just has a bell that rings outside of my residence once triggered, am I still required to have an alarm permit?**

**A.** Yes -- any alarm (other than fire, car or medical alarms) that rings outside of a residence or business where a citizen can hear the alarm going off and possibly call the dispatch center is required to carry a permit. This type of alarm system is what is considered "audible-only."

**Q. I'm over the age of 65 and own a business within the Sandy City Limits that has an alarm system. Is my business exempt from the permit fee?**

**A.** No -- business permits are \$50 for one year.

**Q. I run my business out of my home. Am I required to carry two permits -- one for residential and one for my business?**

**A.** No -- as long as your business is within your home and not in a separate building, you are only required to carry a residential permit.

**Q. I have two buildings on my property, each with an alarm system hooked up. Am I required to carry a permit for each building?**

**A.** Yes -- each individual building is required to carry its own Business or Residential permit (whichever applies).

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