



Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Professionals

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**False Alarm Reduction Association**

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# How to Create an Alarm User Awareness School

Produced by the  
False Alarm Reduction Association

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Public Safety False Alarm Professionals

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## **What is an Alarm User Awareness School?**

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An Alarm User Awareness School is an outreach program designed to teach alarm users how to responsibly use their alarm system, how to prevent false alarms, officer safety issues and the scope and costs associated with false alarms. As many false alarm studies have reported, alarm users cause the vast majority of false alarms. In fact, a considerable number of alarm users think that it is acceptable for them to “only have one or two false alarms” each year. What they do not realize, and what this program can impress upon them, is that if **every** alarm user had “just one or two” false alarms, the numbers would be crippling to public safety.

An Alarm User Awareness School is usually conducted by the municipal alarm ordinance staff. You might consider conducting the Alarm User Awareness School in conjunction with an existing Crime Prevention Program or 9-1-1 Awareness Seminar. Some schools involve the alarm industry, where local alarm companies teach a portion of the class on alarm equipment. The school typically teaches the basic functions of alarm system components, easy maintenance procedures that the alarm user may utilize to prevent false alarms due to equipment malfunction, and the monitoring procedures used by the central station. The alarm ordinance staff will also include officer response, complacency and risk to the officers and citizens.

In many of the municipalities utilizing the Alarm User Awareness School, an alarm user is given the opportunity to waive a false alarm fine if he or she attends the school. Several jurisdictions are using this model to develop innovative ways to reduce false alarms, educate alarm users and save money and resources. Most jurisdictions have found that users welcome the alarm school concept, as it provides opportunities to build positive relationships with the industry and police department, save money on fines, learn more about their systems, and network with others in their community.

## **The Benefits of an Alarm User Awareness School**

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Historically, recidivism rates among Alarm User Awareness School attendees are very low. Many alarm users have communication problems with their alarm installing or monitoring company and the program gives them answers and solutions to their specific problem or question. The program also encourages users to find out what caused an alarm activation, to try to remedy the situation immediately and to be responsible for their system.

One warning: an Alarm User Awareness School can never replace the job that each and every alarm company must do to train its customers after the installation and over the life of the relationship with the customer. The Alarm User Awareness School can provide a one-on-one opportunity to ask questions about general alarm company practices, equipment problems, or poor service. The alarm ordinance staff may suggest options for the user to discuss with their alarm company.

Many localities are also providing an added benefit of waiving a fine or fee for users who attend the Alarm User Awareness School. You should review your policies and procedures and alarm ordinance to see if this benefit can be offered to alarm users in your community.

The Alarm User Awareness class will benefit alarm users, who have experienced false alarms, as well as alarm users who may have just purchased an alarm system and simply want to learn about the process and stay out of the excessive false alarm category. The school outline can be structured to accommodate all of the users mentioned. By allowing all users to attend the school, false alarm prevention can be accomplished at all levels.

## How to Get an Alarm User Awareness School Started

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You can get started today! As soon as you can find a location and instructors, your jurisdiction can get an Alarm User Awareness School started. In order to have a waiver for a fee or fine when a user attends an Alarm User Awareness School in your locality, it must be provided for in your local alarm ordinance. The provision in your ordinance may be no more than one sentence that requires the creation of a school and allows for false alarm fines to be waived for graduates of the school. Even if this is not currently in your ordinance, you can still create an Alarm User Awareness School, which will ultimately result in fewer false alarms.

While there are certain steps that are common to all Alarm User Awareness Schools, false alarms are a local problem, and so are the solutions. Therefore, the most important step in creating an Alarm User Awareness School is forming a working relationship on a local level between the municipal alarm ordinance staff, local alarm companies and the local alarm association. It is upon this three-legged foundation that your Alarm User Awareness School will be built. Contact your local alarm association or a local alarm company representative to assist in teaching the school. If you don't know your local contact, call FARA at (301) 519-9237. By utilizing the alarm industry, the school provides a united front to the alarm user, and the user learns that false alarms are a problem for both the public safety agency and the alarm industry. The local alarm association or local alarm company representative may also be of assistance in gathering alarm equipment to display at the school. Some of this equipment may include: an RJ-Jack, batteries, PIR, glass break sensor, panic buttons, door and window contacts, keypad and a smoke detector. By providing a sample of the various components, users can identify with each piece of equipment as it is explained in the school.

The next step is drafting an outline for your new school. Alarm User Awareness Schools run in length anywhere from two to four hours, so plan accordingly. Your outline should cover: the problem and cost of false alarms, the local impact of false alarms, officer safety issues, tools that your locality is implementing through its local ordinance to reduce false alarms, technical information about alarm systems including specific operating instructions and examples, common causes and solutions to user errors, and the users' responsibility to properly operate their alarm system. **Appendix A** provides a sample overall program outline and suggestions on how you might run your own school. You may also retrieve a sample PowerPoint presentation to use in conducting the class from the Security Industry Alarm Coalition (SIAC) web site at [siacinc.org](http://siacinc.org).

Advertising the Alarm User Awareness School can be extremely important. Many of the local alarm companies, along with the local alarm association, will distribute flyers to their customers. Flyers should be included with all false alarm warnings, assessment letters and permit packets. Local media should also be used.

But an outline is not a school. The most effective schools are hands-on, interactive, and fast-paced. This is where the instructor from the alarm industry, such as a representative from a local company or the local alarm association, can assist. Rather than having an instructor give a three-hour slide show on the false alarm problem, school attendees should be exposed to a dynamic and interactive curriculum. The outline should be kept to as short a duration as possible, and be of a generic nature when discussing alarm companies, alarm equipment or central stations. The instructors should not mention names of alarm companies or specific brands of equipment.

Also, the course should include plenty of alarm system devices that can be used to show examples of the correct and incorrect methods to be used in the proper operation of the system. The sessions should be hands-on, with attendees practicing the proper operation of a system right in the classroom. A brief description in very basic terms of how each component is activated can help the user to better understand what may cause a false alarm and what to watch for.

The school should be held in a relaxed atmosphere, and encourage interaction, questions and examples. An open forum provides for discussions on a variety of problems that may be common among the participants. Print handouts for the attendees to take home with them. A simple packet can contain an overview of the school and may provide additional material for the user to read and refer to, as well.

Finally, attendees must be encouraged to dialog with their alarm company and find out how they can become part of the false alarm solution.

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### **Just One Piece of the Puzzle**

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An Alarm User Awareness School can have a significant impact on your locality's false alarm rate. But it is only one piece of an overall false alarm reduction program. Alarm unit staff, alarm companies and alarm users are all part of the solution.

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### **For More Information Contact:**

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For more information on this topic or other matters related to alarm management, please contact FARA. Sample Alarm User Awareness classes can be found on the following web sites: [www.siacinc.org](http://www.siacinc.org) (Security Industry Alarm Coalition) and [www.csaaul.org](http://www.csaaul.org) (Central Station Alarm Association).

False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA)  
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Web site: <http://www.faraonline.org>

# APPENDIX A

## Alarm User Awareness School

This Appendix provides you with sample literature you may want to utilize when creating your own Alarm User Awareness School. Please feel free to copy and use any or all of the information or customize it to better meet your needs. In addition, the following bullet points can be used to assist you with marketing the Alarm Awareness School to alarm users, as well as your agency's decision makers, who may be determining if this program would benefit your community.

### **Benefits of a False Alarm Prevention Program**

- ❖ Helps to reduce false alarms by educating alarm users
- ❖ Gives both public safety and the alarm industry an opportunity to explain how false alarms affect their respective resources
- ❖ Provides suggestions for monitoring, verification and maintenance procedures that the alarm users may never hear about anywhere else
- ❖ Provides an open forum for discussions on a variety of problems that may be common among participants
- ❖ Alarm users may receive a certificate to waive a false alarm fee or fine
- ❖ Proactive approach to false alarm prevention
- ❖ Shows alarm users that public safety and the alarm industry are serious about false alarms and their negative effects on your entire community
- ❖ Provides real, substantive ways to reduce false alarms

## Sample Announcement/Invitation Flyer A

### FALSE ALARM PREVENTION



- Have you had to pay a fee/fine for false alarms?
- Do you want to **avoid** having to pay a fee/fine for false alarms?

Either way, this program is for you! Come learn about:

- What false alarms are and how to prevent them
- The costs associated with false alarms and how they affect your ability to get public safety response
- Basic functions of your alarm system components
- How to operate your alarm system more effectively and efficiently
- How you can get a waiver for one false alarm fee/fine
- How you can make a difference!

In this interactive, hands-on class, you will learn about the main causes of false alarms and how they can easily be prevented. Don't be part of the problem, be part of the solution. The course is free, but you must call to register. Please contact the False Alarm Reduction Unit at (555) 555-5555 to register today.

When:     Date  
Time:     Time  
Where:    Place



Name of Police Department  
Street Address  
Phone Number  
Web Site Address

## Sample Announcement Flyer B

# Alarm User Awareness School

The Alarm Ordinance **requires** any alarm user, who has had xxx false alarms in a calendar year, to attend a mandatory Alarm User Awareness School. Since our records show you have surpassed this number, you must attend the next session of the Police Department's Alarm User Awareness School. It will be held on \_(date)\_ at \_\_(time)\_\_ in the Conference Room at City Hall. Please call (555) 555-5555 to confirm your attendance. You will be required to pay \$10 for the class at the door.

False alarms are a major source of concern for the Police Department. The alarm ordinance was adopted because of concerns over police officer safety and to eliminate the misuse of police resources, which results in the waste of millions of dollars annually in both actual costs and police officer time. False alarms reduce the police department's effectiveness and undermines our ability to respond to actual criminal activity.

Attendance at the Alarm User Awareness School will teach you how to avoid unnecessary false alarms and the costs associated with them. You will learn about the basic components of an alarm system and how to operate it more effectively and efficiently. Finally, you will learn the main causes of false alarms, how to prevent them and how alarm user training can avoid the greatest percentage of false alarms.

There will be ample time for questions and answers at the end of the session. This will be your opportunity to discuss specific situations that may be particular to your location and to receive cost saving ideas on how to avoid unnecessary dispatch requests in the future.

Be part of the solution, not part of the problem. If you need additional information, please contact the Police Department at (555) 555-5555.

Name of Police Department  
Street Address  
Phone Number  
Web Site Address



## Alarm User Awareness School Program Outline

- 1) Introduction
  - a) Police Department and Alarm Industry Representative
  - b) Course Content Overview
  - c) Alarm System Equipment Overview
  - d) What is a false alarm?
- 2) Alarm Equipment
  - a) Main Components of an Alarm System
    - i) Control Panel
    - ii) Keypad
    - iii) Motion and Glassbreak Detectors
    - iv) Contacts
    - v) Sirens/Speakers
  - b) What Happens when an Alarm is Activated?
    - i) Alarm system is tripped
    - ii) Seizes telephone line and sends a signal to the monitoring center
    - iii) Activates sirens/speakers at alarm site
    - iv) Monitoring center calls premises (or other number) to verify
    - v) If no answer, monitoring center calls responsible party's cell number (i.e. ECV or Enhanced Call Verification)
    - vi) Alarm is cancelled with password or passcode OR
    - vii) Monitoring center calls police
    - viii) Police are dispatched to alarm site
    - ix) Monitoring center calls emergency contacts provided by customer
    - x) If requested, monitoring center will attempt to cancel dispatch with police
- 3) False Alarm Problem/Prevention Overview
  - a) Statistics to Support Need for Alarm Ordinance
    - i) Number of alarm users (residential and commercial)
    - ii) Number of new systems each year and rate of growth
    - iii) False alarm dispatch rate
    - iv) False alarms are what percentage of total calls for service
    - v) Percentage of alarm users vs. total population of your municipality
    - vi) Costs to the department annually and per response
    - vii) Number of wasted hours responding to false alarms
    - viii) Number of officers needed to respond to false alarms
  - b) Results of False Alarms
    - i) Waste public safety and taxpayer money
    - ii) May cause complacency in officers, which raises officer safety concerns
    - iii) May eventually lead to limited or non-response to alarms
    - iv) Diverts public safety from handling actual criminal activity
    - v) Alarm abusers receive disproportionate response over responsible alarm users or those citizens who don't have a system at all

c) Causes of False Alarms

- i) User error
- ii) Misapplication of equipment
- iii) Outside environmental factors
- iv) Weather
- v) Installation quality

d) What Alarm Users Can Do to Avoid False Alarms and False Dispatches

- i) Understand completely how your alarm system works
- ii) Train and retrain all persons with access to your home or business
- iii) Know how to cancel an alarm dispatch and teach all persons with keys to your facility how to cancel a dispatch
- iv) Contact your alarm company when you: change your environment, obtain a pet, redecorate, have children, if you put your house on the market for sale, or have any unexplained false alarms
- v) If you make any changes to your telephone system, i.e., addition of call intercept, call waiting, or switch your home phone number from a traditional land line telephone to a cellular or wireless phone, it is imperative that you contact your alarm company and notify them of these changes.
- vi) Turn off system if you re-enter your premises and reset it when you leave again
- vii) Test system regularly
- viii) Have system inspected annually by a licensed alarm company
- ix) Do not install (or remove if you already have them) single action holdup buttons
- x) Ensure that your premises are maintained (door and windows fit tight in their frames, etc.)
- xi) Understand what causes a motion detector to activate and ensure that nothing is placed in its "field of vision"
- xii) Ensure that all windows and doors are locked prior to activating the alarm system

4) Main Provisions of Alarm Ordinance

- a) Registration/Permit Fees
- b) Renewal Term and Fees
- c) What is a False Alarm?
- d) Number of "Free" False Alarms Per Year
- e) False Alarm Response Fees/Fines
- f) Inspection Requirements
- g) Non-response or limited response provisions
- h) Appeal rights
- i) Mandatory verification of alarm signal prior to requesting police dispatch
- j) Mandatory cancellation if an alarm signal is determined to be false
- k) Licensing of alarm companies
- l) Education
- m) Criminal/civil penalties for violations
- n) Mandatory "soak" period
- o) Waiver of one false alarm fee/fine for attendance at Alarm User Awareness School

5) What Your Alarm Company Can Do

- a) Understand your environment prior to recommending a particular type of alarm system
- b) Install the alarm system in a competent manner as per manufacturer's guidelines
- c) Provide extensive training to *all* users of your alarm system on its proper operation
- d) Leave a simple, easy to understand, written instruction manual to reinforce the on-site training

- e) Explain the different components of your specific alarm system and how they work
  - f) Provide procedures for canceling an accidental alarm activation
  - g) Help you understand the difference between a password/passcode, which is used to cancel an accidental alarm activation and an entry/exit code, which is used to turn the system on/off
  - h) At the time of sale and/or installation, discuss false alarms and how to prevent them
  - i) Provide you with the alarm company and monitoring center phone numbers
  - j) Completely test the alarm system and every component to ensure proper operation before activating the alarm system
  - k) Provide you with permit/registration information required by your local law enforcement agency
  - l) Complete and sign a comprehensive Installation Checklist
  - m) Attempt to verify the validity of an alarm activation prior to requesting police dispatch
  - n) Provide prompt and effective repair to the system both during regular business hours and beyond
  - o) Provide prompt and courteous answers to follow up questions
- 6) Question and Answer Period
- 7) For More Information
- a) False Alarm Reduction Association
  - b) National Burglar and Fire Alarm Association
  - c) Security Industry Alarm Coalition
  - d) State and Local Alarm Associations and Alarm Companies
  - e) Local Public Safety Agencies
  - f) Installation Quality Certification Board
- 8) Handouts
- a) False Alarm Reduction Brochures (developed by public safety agency and/or alarm industry)
  - b) False Alarm Reduction Brochures (developed by FARA)
  - c) Instructional Bulletins for specific causes of false alarms (FARA)
  - d) Copies of alarm ordinance and rules and regulations
  - e) Sheet containing contact information and web site addresses
  - f) False Alarm Fee/Fine Waiver Certificate (if applicable)
  - g) Course Evaluation Form

## Sample Installation Checklist

The installer should fully explain all items in the checklist and the customer and installer should complete the checklist together. Carefully read through the following items and place a check in all appropriate boxes. If anything is unclear to the customer, have your installer further explain.

### Customer Instruction

#### **All Users of the System:**

- Are trained in the proper operation of the system
- Have appropriate, simple operating instructions
- Have supplied a list of key-holders and contact persons to the alarm company and understand the need to keep this information updated
- Know how to cancel an accidental alarm activation
- Know how to test the system, including communications with the central station
- Have selected both a password/passcode and entry/exit code and understand the difference
- Have the central station phone number
- Have the service phone number(s)
- Are satisfied with the work completed
- Have received information regarding the city/county alarm ordinance and permit/registration requirements
- Were trained about the causes of false alarms and how to avoid them
- Understand the relationship my alarm system has with pets, and I agree to contact my alarm company should I acquire additional pets
- Understand monitoring procedures and how ECV applies

### System Tests

#### **As the customer, I understand:**

- How to arm and disarm the system
- How to bypass zones
- All sensors were tested and performed satisfactorily
- All features of the system have been tested, including communication with the central station and backup battery power
- All devices are firmly in place
- All warning decals and yard signs are in place
- All installed panic/medical activations will cause an audible alarm
- All silent alarms use dual activation or a keyed manual reset after activation
- There is sufficient sound on all audible alarms to alert or wake normal hearing persons when the alarm is activated

### Installation Performance

#### **The Installer has explained and assured that:**

- All equipment was installed in accordance with UL or FM standards and in accordance with manufacturer's specifications
- The system has standby power sufficient to operate the alarm system in a non-alarm status (without being the cause of an alarm activation) for a minimum of 4 hours
- All power consuming devices are point identified
- The system adheres to all NFPA, state and local codes
- Connections to the telephone network were made in accordance with tariff regulations and guidelines
- All motion sensors are properly applied and walk tested for coverage
- All audible devices will automatically silence no more than 15 minutes after activation
- Primary system power is adequate, secured to an outlet and is not on a switched circuit

\_\_\_\_\_  
Customer (Print Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Customer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Installer (Print Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Installer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# **Sample Evaluation Form**

## **Alarm User Awareness School Evaluation**

In an effort to better serve our citizens and make this course interesting, informative and pertinent, please take a few moments to complete the following evaluation. Your comments and suggestions will help us plan future programs of this type. Thank you.

### **Instructors:**

\_\_\_\_\_

Public Safety Instructor

\_\_\_\_\_

Alarm Industry Instructor

### **Please select one of the following, which best describes the course:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Worthwhile – I had no previous knowledge of this subject
- \_\_\_\_\_ Worthwhile – The course increased or improved my knowledge of this subject
- \_\_\_\_\_ Somewhat worthwhile – The program added to or reinforced my previous knowledge, but not to a great degree
- \_\_\_\_\_ Could have been worthwhile – If the class materials were better
- \_\_\_\_\_ Could have been worthwhile – If the instructors were better
- \_\_\_\_\_ Not worthwhile – It was repetitious of what I already knew

### **Please evaluate the following components of the course:**

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Amount of information presented	_____	_____	_____	_____
Quality of information presented	_____	_____	_____	_____
Public Safety Presenter	_____	_____	_____	_____
Alarm Industry Presenter	_____	_____	_____	_____
Classroom facility	_____	_____	_____	_____
Length of course	_____	_____	_____	_____
Quality of visual aids	_____	_____	_____	_____
Quality of handouts	_____	_____	_____	_____
Date and time of course	_____	_____	_____	_____

### **General Comments:**

## **Sample False Alarm Fee/Fine Waiver**

Name of Police Department  
Street Address  
Phone Number  
Web Site Address

### **False Alarm Fee/Fine Waiver**

This Certificate entitles the following alarm user to waive any **one** false alarm fee/fine assessment:

Alarm User Permit/Registration No.  
Alarm User Name  
Alarm User Street Address  
Alarm User City, State, Zip

This Certificate is valid only for the above-named alarm user and alarm location. It is not transferable to another alarm user OR for the same alarm user at a different location.

If you should have an additional false alarm after attending the Alarm User Awareness School and wish to submit this Certificate in lieu of payment of the false alarm fee/fine assessment, please forward the original of this Certificate to the police department at the above address within the time frame designated for payment. Your assessment will be marked as waived. Any future false alarms will be calculated as if this assessment were not waived.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Police Department Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Appendix A**

### **Alarm User Awareness School**

This Appendix provides you with sample literature you may want to utilize when creating your own Alarm User Awareness School. Please feel free to copy and use any or all of the information or customize it to better meet your needs.

#### **Benefits of a False Alarm Prevention Program**

- ❖ Helps to reduce false alarms by educating alarm users
- ❖ Gives both law enforcement and the alarm industry an opportunity to explain how false alarms affect their respective resources
- ❖ Provides suggestions for monitoring, verification and maintenance procedures that the alarm users may never hear from anywhere else
- ❖ Provides an open forum for discussions on a variety of problems that may be common among participants
- ❖ Alarm users may receive a certificate to waive a false alarm fee or fine
- ❖ Proactive approach to false alarm prevention
- ❖ Shows alarm users that law enforcement and the alarm industry are serious about false alarms and their negative effects on your entire community
- ❖ Provides real, substantive ways to reduce false alarms

Sample Announcement/Invitation Flyer A

**FALSE ALARM PREVENTION**



- Have you had to pay a fee/fine for false alarms?
- Do you want to **avoid** having to pay a fee/fine for false alarms?

Either way, this program is for you! Come learn about:

- What false alarms are and how to prevent them
- The costs associated with false alarms and how they affect your ability to get law enforcement response
- Basic functions of your alarm system components
- How to operate your alarm system more effectively and efficiently
- How you can get a waiver for one false alarm fee/fine
- How you can make a difference!

In this interactive, hands-on class, you will learn about the main causes of false alarms and how they can easily be prevented. Don't be part of the problem, be part of the solution. The course is free, but you must call to register. Please contact the False Alarm Reduction Unit at (555) 555-5555 to register today.

When:     Date  
Time:     Time  
Where:    Place



Name of Police Department  
Street Address  
Phone Number  
Web Site Address



## Sample Announcement Flyer B

# Alarm User Awareness School

The Alarm Ordinance **requires** any alarm user, who has had xxx false alarms in a calendar year, to attend a mandatory Alarm User Awareness School. Since our records show you have surpassed this number, you must attend the next session of the Police Department's Alarm User Awareness School. It will be held on \_\_\_(date)\_\_\_ at \_\_\_(time)\_\_\_ in the Conference Room at City Hall. Please call (555) 555-5555 to confirm your attendance. You will be required to pay \$10 for the class at the door.

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There will be ample time for questions and answers at the end of the session. This will be your opportunity to discuss specific situations that may be particular to your location and to receive cost saving ideas on how to avoid unnecessary dispatch requests in the future.

Be part of the solution, not part of the problem. If you need additional information, please contact the Police Department at (555) 555-5555.

Name of Police Department  
Street Address  
Phone Number  
Web Site Address

## **Alarm User Awareness School** **Program Outline**

- 1) Introduction
  - a) Police Department and Alarm Industry Representative
  - b) Course Content Overview
  - c) Alarm System Equipment Overview
  - d) What is a false alarm?
  
- 2) Alarm Equipment
  - a) Main Components of an Alarm System
    - i) Control Panel
    - ii) Keypad
    - iii) Motion and Glassbreak Detectors
    - iv) Contacts
    - v) Sirens/Speakers
  
  - b) What Happens when an Alarm is Activated?
    - i) Alarm system is tripped
    - ii) Seizes telephone line and sends a signal to the monitoring center
    - iii) Activates sirens/speakers at alarm site
    - iv) Monitoring center calls premises (or other number) to verify
    - v) Alarm is cancelled with password or passcode OR
    - vi) Monitoring center calls police
    - vii) Police are dispatched to alarm site
    - viii) Monitoring center calls emergency contacts provided by customer
    - ix) If requested, monitoring center will attempt to cancel dispatch with police
  
- 3) False Alarm Problem/Prevention Overview
  - a) Statistics to Support Need for Alarm Ordinance
    - i) Number of alarm users (residential and commercial)
    - ii) Number of new systems each year and rate of growth
    - iii) False alarm dispatch rate
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  - b) Results of False Alarms
    - i) Waste law enforcement and taxpayer money
    - ii) May cause complacency in officers, which raises officer safety concerns
    - iii) May eventually lead to limited or non-response to alarms
    - iv) Diverts law enforcement from handling actual criminal activity
    - v) Alarm abusers receive disproportionate response over responsible alarm users or those citizens who don't have a system at all

c) Causes of False Alarms

- i) User error
- ii) Misapplication of equipment
- iii) Outside environmental factors
- iv) Weather
- v) Installation quality

d) What Alarm Users Can Do to Avoid False Alarms and False Dispatches

- i) Understand completely how your alarm system works
- ii) Train and retrain all persons with access to your home or business
- iii) Know how to cancel an alarm dispatch and teach all persons with keys to your facility how to cancel a dispatch
- iv) Contact your alarm company when you: change your environment, get a new phone number or add features to your phone (call waiting), obtain a pet, redecorate, have children, if you put your house on the market for sale, or have any unexplained false alarms
- v) Turn off system if you re-enter your premises and reset it when you leave again
- vi) Test system regularly
- vii) Have system inspected annually by a licensed alarm company
- viii) Do not install (or remove if you already have them) single action holdup buttons
- ix) Ensure that your premises are maintained (door and windows fit tight in their frames, etc.)
- x) Understand what causes a motion detector to activate and ensure that nothing is placed in its "field of vision"
- xi) Ensure that all windows and doors are locked prior to activating the alarm system

4) Main Provisions of Alarm Ordinance

- a) Registration/Permit Fees
- b) Renewal Term and Fees
- c) What is a False Alarm?
- d) Number of "Free" False Alarms Per Year
- e) False Alarm Response Fees/Fines
- f) Inspection Requirements
- g) Non-response or limited response provisions
- h) Appeal rights
- i) Mandatory verification of alarm signal prior to requesting police dispatch
- j) Mandatory cancellation if an alarm signal is determined to be false
- k) Licensing of alarm companies
- l) Education
- m) Criminal/civil penalties for violations
- n) Mandatory "soak" period
- o) Waiver of one false alarm fee/fine for attendance at Alarm User Awareness School

5) What Your Alarm Company Can Do

- a) Understand your environment prior to recommending a particular type of alarm system

- b) Install the alarm system in a competent manner as per manufacturer's guidelines
  - c) Provide extensive training to *all* users of your alarm system on its proper operation
  - d) Leave a simple, easy to understand, written instruction manual to reinforce the on-site training
  - e) Explain the different components of your specific alarm system and how they work
  - f) Provide procedures for canceling an accidental alarm activation
  - g) Help you understand the difference between a password and a passcode and how to use them both
  - h) At the time of sale and/or installation, discuss false alarms and how to prevent them
  - i) Provide you with the alarm company and monitoring center phone numbers
  - j) Completely test the alarm system and every component to ensure proper operation before activating the alarm system
  - k) Provide you with permit/registration information required by your local law enforcement agency
  - l) Complete and sign a comprehensive Installation Checklist
  - m) Attempt to verify the validity of an alarm activation prior to requesting police dispatch
  - n) Provide prompt and effective repair to the system both during regular business hours and beyond
  - o) Provide prompt and courteous answers to follow up questions
- 6) Question and Answer Period
- 7) For More Information
- a) False Alarm Reduction Association
  - b) National Burglar and Fire Alarm Association
  - c) Security Industry Alarm Coalition
  - d) State and Local Alarm Associations and Alarm Companies
  - e) Local Law Enforcement Agencies
  - f) Installation Quality Certification Board
- 8) Handouts
- a) False Alarm Reduction Brochures (developed by law enforcement agency and/or alarm industry)
  - b) False Alarm Reduction Brochures (developed by FARA)
  - c) Instructional Bulletins for specific causes of false alarms (FARA)
  - d) Copies of alarm ordinance and rules and regulations
  - e) Sheet containing contact information and web site addresses
  - f) False Alarm Fee/Fine Waiver Certificate (if applicable)
  - g) Course Evaluation Form

# Sample Installation Checklist

The installer should fully explain all items in the checklist and the customer and installer should complete the checklist together. Carefully read through the following items and place a check in all appropriate boxes. If anything is unclear to the customer, have your installer further explain.

## Customer Instruction

### **All Users of the System:**

- Are trained in the proper operation of the system
- Have appropriate, simple operating instructions
- Know how to cancel an accidental alarm activation
- Know how to test the system, including communications with the central station
- Have the cancellation code
- Have selected both a password and a passcode and understand the difference
- Have the central station phone number
- Have the service phone number(s)
- Are satisfied with the work completed
- Have received information regarding the city/county alarm ordinance and permit/registration requirements
- Were trained about the causes of false alarms and how to avoid them
- Understand the relationship my alarm system has with pets, and I agree to contact my alarm company should I acquire additional pets

## System Tests

### **As the customer, I understand:**

- How to arm and disarm the system
- How to bypass zones
- All sensors were tested and performed satisfactorily
- All features of the system have been tested, including communication with the central station and backup battery power
- All devices are firmly in place
- All warning decals and yard signs are in place
- All installed panic/medical activations will cause an audible alarm
- All silent alarms use dual activation or a keyed manual reset after activation
- There is sufficient sound on all audible alarms to alert or wake normal hearing persons when the alarm is activated

## Installation Performance

### **The Installer has explained and assured that:**

- All equipment was installed in accordance with UL or FM standards and in accordance with manufacturer's specifications
- The system has standby power sufficient to operate the alarm system in a non-alarm status (without being the cause of an alarm activation) for a minimum of 4 hours
- All power consuming devices are point identified
- The system adheres to all NFPA, state and local codes
- Connections to the telephone network were made in accordance with tariff regulations and guidelines
- All motion sensors are properly applied and walk tested for coverage
- All audible devices will automatically silence no more than 15 minutes after activation
- Primary system power is adequate, secured to an outlet and is not on a switched circuit

\_\_\_\_\_  
Customer (Print Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Customer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Installer (Print Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Installer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# **Sample Evaluation Form**

## **Alarm User Awareness School Evaluation**

In an effort to better serve our citizens and make this course interesting, informative and pertinent, please take a few moments to complete the following evaluation. Your comments and suggestions will help us plan future programs of this type. Thank you.

### **Instructors:**

\_\_\_\_\_

Law Enforcement Instructor

\_\_\_\_\_

Alarm Industry Instructor

### **Please select one of the following, which best describes the course:**

- Worthwhile – I had no previous knowledge of this subject
- Worthwhile – The course increased or improved my knowledge of this subject
- Somewhat worthwhile – The program added to or reinforced my previous knowledge, but not to a great degree
- Could have been worthwhile – If the class materials were better
- Could have been worthwhile – If the instructors were better
- Not worthwhile – It was repetitious of what I already knew

### **Please evaluate the following components of the course:**

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Amount of information presented	_____	_____	_____	_____
Quality of information presented	_____	_____	_____	_____
Classroom facility	_____	_____	_____	_____
Length of course	_____	_____	_____	_____
Quality of visual aids	_____	_____	_____	_____
Quality of handouts	_____	_____	_____	_____
Date and time of course	_____	_____	_____	_____

### **General Comments:**

**Sample False Alarm Fee/Fine Waiver**

Name of Police Department  
Street Address  
Phone Number  
Web Site Address

**False Alarm Fee/Fine Waiver**

This Certificate entitles the following alarm user to waive any **one** false alarm fee/fine assessment:

Alarm User Permit/Registration No.  
Alarm User Name  
Alarm User Street Address  
Alarm User City, State, Zip

This Certificate is valid only for the above-named alarm user and alarm location. It is not transferable to another alarm user OR for the same alarm user at a different location.

If you should have an additional false alarm after attending the Alarm User Awareness School and wish to submit this Certificate in lieu of payment of the false alarm fee/fine assessment, please forward the original of this Certificate to the police department at the above address within the time frame designated for payment. Your assessment will be marked as waived. Any future false alarms will be calculated as if this assessment were not waived.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Police Department Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date