

Selling a Home Should Not be Alarming!

False burglar alarms are costly, dangerous and divert law enforcement officers from responding to true emergencies and engaging in crime prevention activities. Annually, law enforcement officers respond to millions of false alarm calls.



What causes these false alarms and how can we reduce them?

Some false alarms are caused by real estate agents while they are showing properties. Generally, if a municipality has an alarm ordinance, any fees or fines for false alarm responses will be charged to the property owner. Should this happen, the property owner will likely hold the agent liable.

What Sellers Should Do

- Discuss with your real estate agent the use of the burglar alarm system while your home is on the market.
- Contact your monitoring company to advise that the property is on the market and that real estate agents will be in and out throughout the day. Set up special instructions so they call the house, your cell phone, and your work phone before they request dispatch on all burglar alarm activations. Ensure that the alarm company has up to date home, cell and work phone numbers for you.
- Provide complete training to agents on how to properly arm and disarm the alarm system. Remember, you, the property owner or the alarm user, will be responsible for penalties associated with false alarms.
- Obtain a separate arm/disarm code and password for real estate agents who are allowed to enter the home during the sale period. Agents can use their codes to turn off the alarm system, cancel response and identify themselves to the alarm company as a valid alarm user.
- Consider attaching a non-removable tag to the key in your lock-box that provides the arm/disarm code, as well as the appropriate password. You can also include simple instructions on how to operate the system and what to do if an agent accidentally causes a false alarm.



What Listing Real Estate Agents Should Do

- Include in the listing documents the fact that there is an active alarm system on site.
- Educate real estate agents on how to arm and disarm the system and how to cancel a false alarm.
- If passcodes and passwords are not provided, ask the property owner what action should be taken if the alarm is activated accidentally. This may prompt the property owner to contact the alarm/monitoring company to set up "special instructions" with passcodes and passwords.

What Visiting Real Estate Agents Should Do

- Before you enter a property, find out if the property owner has an active alarm system installed.
- If there is an active alarm system, contact the listing agent to determine the proper procedures for entering the property.
- Answer the phone at the site to prevent a law enforcement dispatch.
- If you cause a false alarm, notify the listing agent and monitoring station immediately.

By taking these few simple steps and working closely together, the alarm user and real estate agents can reduce or eliminate false alarms thereby making law enforcement available for true emergencies.

