



Village of McConnellsville
9 West Main Street
McConnellsville, Ohio 43756

False Alarms and Their Impact on You

Alarm systems are designed to protect lives and property if they are installed, used, and maintained properly. When the alarm systems are not properly maintained, they do not work effectively jeopardizing the safety of your family, your home, and your personal belongings.

False alarms are caused by human error or equipment problems that go unnoticed or unaddressed, requiring a police response with no evidence of any crime being committed. Responding to false alarms is time consuming and costly and can take police officers away from important calls for assistance. In fact, in a recent national survey, over **98%** of the alarm calls that officers responded to were false, with less than **2%** of the alarm calls that police responded to were the result of a criminal act.

There are a number of reasons why false alarms occur, including, but not limited to:

1. Failure to train authorized users.
2. Use of incorrect keypad codes.
3. Failure to secure doors and windows before turning the alarm system on.
4. Failure to notify monitoring facility of unscheduled openings or closings.
5. Failure to update authorized personnel list or responsible parties with the monitoring company.
6. Improper application or installation of interior motion detectors.
7. Improper application or installation of outdoor beams.
8. Improper charging or maintenance of batteries.
9. Changes in the environment such as new animals, design changes, seasonal decorations, and plants.
10. Faulty equipment (i.e. panels, detectors, key pads, etc.)

Understanding your alarm system and how it works will help reduce the number of false alarm calls police officers respond to due to faulty systems or human error. Provided below are some tips that can help prevent your alarm system from being activated accidentally:

- If you accidentally set off your alarm, let your alarm monitoring station know immediately. Remember your pass code and/or password.
- Make sure all alarm users and key holders to the building are trained to use the system and know the codes to arm and disarm the system; including how to cancel a false alarm.
- Do not call 911 to cancel an alarm call. You must call your alarm monitoring station.
- You can arrange to have your alarm monitoring station call you or another designated person first instead of the police when your alarm is activated. This is known as call verification.
- If you expect workers, real estate agents, delivery personnel, etc. do not set your alarm. If you must set your alarm, meet the people at your site to deactivate the alarm. Remember that you are responsible for false alarms caused by them. You can also arrange with your alarm company to have separate codes for them.
- If your system sends a silent panic/duress signal when an incorrect code is entered, you might consider having that feature disconnected. Often when in a hurry to arm or disarm the alarm, an incorrect code is entered and the police are dispatched. Since the alarm was a panic/duress signal, you will not hear the alarm and your alarm monitoring station will not call you.

- Be sure that doors and windows are tight fitting. Adjust hinges and strike plates to minimize movement when pulled or pushed on.
- Have an arming delay of at least 45 seconds on all doors.
- Have wide-gap sensors installed on all doors.
- Lock all protected doors and windows. Do not leave doors and windows open or unlocked while you are away. Be sure all doors and windows are properly closed and locked prior to arming the alarm system.
- Do not leave anything that will move (pets, plants, balloons, drapes, blinds, etc.) in a room that is protected with a motion detector.
- Have the sensitivity settings on motion detectors and glass-break sensors adjusted so that unwanted sounds or items do not activate them.
- You can arrange with your alarm company not to dispatch the police for interior motion sensor activations without having other sensors activated. This is known as "double sensor" dispatching.
- If storms or brief power outages of two (2) hours or less activate your alarm system, your system needs to be checked and adjusted.
- Call your alarm company after each false alarm to determine the cause of the false alarm. You will continue to have false alarms until the problem is repaired or adjusted.
- If a fence encloses your alarmed location, the police cannot properly check your property. There are private security companies that can provide alarm responses to these locations.
- Have your alarm system checked and tested regularly. Having a service plan helps reduce future costs of equipment repair.
- If your alarm system is more than five years old, now is the time to consider upgrading or updating the equipment.

For more information please call 740-962-3163.