Preventing False Alarms – A problem for all of us.

While a professionally installed and monitored alarm system is a proven way to deter crime, as more and more families and businesses choose to protect their lives and property with alarm systems, the numbers of false alarms increase.

A false alarm is simply the activation of an alarm system caused by human error or mechanical failure. False alarms are more than just irritating. They take police and other emergency workers away from real emergencies, risk lives, cost money, and make each alarm system less credible.

At The Alarm Company, we take false alarms seriously, and as an alarm owner, it is important that you take responsibility for the proper operation of your alarm system.

What Causes False Alarms?

• The vast majority of all false alarms are caused by human error. Ensuring that all users are properly trained on the use of an alarm system is the single most important thing anyone can do to prevent false alarms.

• Failure to make sure doors and windows are completely shut and locked before leaving.

• Faulty or improperly maintained equipment. If you suspect that your system has a problem, call your security company immediately to schedule a service call.

• Balloons, ceiling fans, hanging and swaying banners or anything else that causes motion.

Why Are False Alarms an Issue?

• False alarms reduce the effectiveness of security systems. If alarms are seen as unreliable indicators of threats, they may potentially be ignored.

• False alarms exhaust the resources of police, fire and emergency personnel and keep them from responding to actual emergencies.

• False alarms increase costs for taxpayers, security service providers and users, requiring additional personnel to respond to alarms.

• False alarms can carry fines. In many cities and towns, the owners of systems that trigger false alarms can be fined for each occurrence.

• False alarms can lead to denial of service. In some cities and towns, police, fire and emergency personnel are instructed to ignore the alarms of users whose systems have set off false alarms in the past.

How can you help decrease the false alarm rate?

• Test your system weekly for proper operation.

• Train the necessary people in the use of your home's alarm system and schedule annual review sessions.

• Replace all batteries regularly.

• Review your alarm system operating manual. Take time to educate everyone with access to your home on proper system operation.

• Make sure ever system operator knows the cancellation password in case of a false alarm.

• Regularly check alarm contact switches/magnets on doors and windows for damage.

• Check that all doors and windows are locked and cannot be inadvertently opened by a strong breeze. Improperly adjust doors and windows that can freely move more than 1/8" while closed should be adjusted.

• Clean all motion detectors and ensure that they are free from bugs and spider webs.

• Regularly check local alarm ordinances, if any, that govern the operation of the system and ensure that all permits, fees and other required components are in compliance to prevent any pitfalls with local authorities.