

TIPS TO REDUCE FALSE ALARMS

Responding to false alarms is costly to you and the Police Department. Listed below are some tips that can help you prevent false alarms and possibly save you money in the form of false alarm fines.

- If your alarm is accidentally activated, don't panic, don't call 911, call your alarm monitoring station immediately. Give them your passcode and/or password in order to cancel the police.
- 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.
- If you expect workers, real estate agents, delivery personnel, etc., consider not setting your alarm. If you must set your alarm, meet the people at your site and deactivate the alarm. 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, understand that your alarm company may not call you to verify the alarm. You should contact your alarm company if the alarm is false and have them cancel the police.
- Be sure that doors and windows are tight fitting. Adjust hinges and strike plates on doors, so they move no more than ¼ inch when pulled or pushed on.
- Have an arming delay of at least 45 seconds on all doors.
- Do not leave doors and windows open or unlocked while you are away.
- Do not leave anything that will move (pets, balloons, drapes, fans, etc...) in a room that is protected with a motion detector.
- Have the sensitivity settings on glass-break sensors adjusted so that sounds, such as thunder and outside construction, 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; i.e., a door activation with a motion sensor activation.
- If your alarm is falsely activated during a power outage or storm, have your alarm company test your system.
- Check your batteries regularly especially if you experience frequent power outages.
- Call your alarm company after each false alarm to determine the cause of the false alarm. You may continue to have false alarms until the problem is repaired or adjusted.
- Use video or audio verification if possible so the monitoring company can either "hear" or "see" your premise to determine if an intruder is present.

HELPFUL HINTS

There are several precautions that you can take to help the Greensboro Police Department serve you better:

- 1. Secure the premises** - Be sure that all doors and windows are shut and locked before the alarm systems are armed.
- 2. Maintain Systems** - Service systems and check batteries regularly to guard against system malfunctions. Periodically contact your monitoring company to stay informed of alarm activations. The Police Department is not responsible for informing you of system activations.
- 3. Educate Others** - Be certain that family members and employees are trained to use the system. Be especially careful to let others know when passcodes are changed.
- 4. Send Representatives** - Police officers cannot thoroughly check your home or business if they cannot gain entry. Be sure that your monitoring company has a up-to-date call list of individuals that have keys to your property should you not be available to respond.

!!! IMPORTANT NOTE !!!

The cancellation of the alarm must take place prior to the officers' arrival to the scene of the reported alarm. The officer **CANNOT** be cancelled once he/she arrives on scene. If the alarm is determined to be false, and the alarm subscriber or the alarm monitor cancellation arrives after the officer arrives, then the false alarm will be counted towards the twelve month infraction period.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION...

Concerning the alarm ordinance or police response, contact the Alarm Coordinator of the Greensboro Police Department at 336-373-2905, Monday through Friday, 8 am until 5 pm.

or e-mail alarm@greensboro-nc.gov

Visit the Greensboro Police Department's website
www.greensboro-nc.gov/police
www.gsopd.org

Questions concerning payment of civil penalties should be directed to City of Greensboro Collections Division at 336-373-2310, Monday through Friday, 8 am until 5 pm.



GREENSBORO POLICE DEPARTMENT

ALARM ORDINANCE INFORMATION

Alarm Coordinator

Office: 336-373-2905

Fax: 336-373-7709

E-mail: alarm@greensboro-nc.gov

HISTORY

On July 1, 1989, the Greensboro City Council enacted City Ordinance Chapter 18, Sections 26, 27, and 28 regarding burglary and robbery alarms. This action became necessary due to the excessive number of false alarm calls reported to the Police Department, which has exceeded 16,000 calls annually. In fact 98% of all alarm calls are found to be false alarms, diverting over \$960,000 worth of police services each year.

WHAT IS A FALSE ALARM?

Greensboro City Ordinance, Section 18-26 states in part that a false alarm is any alarm signal that solicits police response and to which:

(1)The responding officer finds no evidence of unauthorized intrusion, robbery, or attempted robbery.

False alarms include:

- negligently activated signals which are the result of faulty or malfunctioning equipment
- improperly installed or maintained equipment
- signals activated to test the alarm system that have not been approved by the Greensboro Police Department
- signals which are purposely activated to summon police personnel in non-emergency situations

WHAT ABOUT MISTAKES?

Recognizing that everyone makes mistakes, if the Police Department responds to one false alarm at the same location within a twelve-consecutive month period, the Alarm Coordinator will send a letter to the subscriber to inform of the false alarm and request that action be taken to stop further false alarms. There will be no fee assessed for the first false alarm within a twelve-consecutive month period. If you accidentally activate your alarm system, you should immediately notify your monitoring station.

REGISTRATION

Registration of alarm systems is not required at this time.

Civil Tickets

False alarm fines begin on the second (2nd) false alarm and range from \$50 to \$500.

# of False Alarm Infractions	Amount Fined (US \$)
1	\$0
2	\$50
3 and 4	\$100
5 thru 9	\$250
10+	\$500

Audible Alarms

Since a central station does not monitor audible alarms, requests for police services on these alarms are usually made by neighbors living in the area or a passerby. Audible systems should be equipped with an automatic reset device that will reset and cease to sound the alarm after a reasonable period of continuous activation. City Ordinance 18-27d states that an alarm that sounds continuously for a period

APPEALS

Can I appeal and what is the time I have to file any appeal for an alarm civil fine?

You may file an appeal within fourteen (14) days of the invoice date of the civil citation. A subscriber who has received their first invoice for the civil penalty and who appeals that invoice within the required fourteen (14) day period of the date of the invoice will have the civil penalty for the first invoice waived. The subscriber and the alarm coordinator will utilize the first invoice appeal as an opportunity to attempt to reconcile any issues that may have attributed to the false alarms and the subsequent civil penalty.

If the subscriber fails to submit the appeal in the fourteen (14) day time period, then the civil penalty is imposed. All subsequent false alarms will then be handled in the manner consistent with the applicable city ordinance and policy. You may also appeal the initial alarm if you feel that the alarm was not false.

How can I appeal a civil penalty for false alarms?

There are several ways to submit your appeal. You can mail the appeal to the Greensboro Police Department Alarm Coordinator at PO Box 3136, Greensboro, NC 27402-3136 or you can send your appeal by e-mail to alarm@greensboro-nc.gov. You may also file an appeal in person at The Kitchen Operations Center at 2602

of thirty (30) minutes from the time officers arrive at the alarm location, due to failure of the alarm to reset, shall constitute an additional violation of this section every thirty minutes.

A Word of Warning

Other demands for public service throughout the city may delay police response to an alarm call. If you or one of your representatives responds to the premises and a police officer is not present, **DO NOT ENTER THE BUILDING.** Perhaps officers have already checked the area and cleared the call, or as mentioned above, police response may have been delayed. You may phone Police Communications at 336-373-2222 to verify whether an officer has already checked the premises.

S. Elm-Eugene St, Greensboro, NC 27405, Monday through Friday 9 am to 4 pm. If you choose to come in person, it is strongly recommended that you contact the Alarm Coordinator at 336-373-2905 to schedule your appeal appointment.

Be sure to include your name, the alarm location, date of the alarm, reason for the appeal, and any supporting evidence when filing your appeal.

Please use the following list as a guide to assist you in deciding whether to appeal a false alarm and/or contact your alarm company. If the reason for the alarm is one of the items contained in this list, any appeal would more than likely be denied (this list is not intended to cover every situation for which an appeal may be denied):

- Faulty, defective, or malfunctioning equipment
- Improperly installed or maintained equipment
- Calls dispatched in error by the monitoring service
- Power outages/weather
- Operator/human errors
- Items which cause motion detectors to activate (balloons, curtains, etc.)
- Activations due to loud noises
- Improperly secured premises or loose fitting doors and windows
- Pets, rodents, or any other animal or insect
- Signals purposely activated to summon police in non-emergency situations