

# ALARM USER AWARENESS CLASS

City of Maricopa Police Department



# THE ALARM PROCESS

1. The alarm is activated at the premises (glass break, open door, or motion)
2. Signal is sent to the control panel
3. Siren is activated at property
4. Signal is sent to Alarm Company's monitoring center
5. Alarm Company calls Alarm User to verify alarm and request pass code Alarm is cancelled with correct pass code or password
6. Alarm Company calls Maricopa Police Department if contact isn't made with Alarm User, or wrong codes provided
7. \*Police Dispatch dispatches officers to the property
8. Once Officers respond to the address, and determine the alarm to be false, the Alarm Coordinator will follow the guidelines set forth in the Alarm Systems Ordinance for the False Alarm procedure.

\*If the Alarm Company calls Police back cancelling the alarm, and officers have not yet arrived on scene, no False Alarm fee will be assessed.



# WHAT IS A FALSE ALARM?

***False Alarm*** means the activation of an Alarm System through-

- Mechanical or electronic failure
- Malfunction
- Improper installation
- Negligence of the Alarm User, his/her employees or agents

resulting in law enforcement response to the property, unless the Alarm User's Alarm Company cancels the alarm prior to officer's arrival at the alarmed location.



# WHAT IS A FALSE ALARM?

An *alarm* is *false* when upon inspection by the Maricopa Police Department, evidence indicates that-

- no unauthorized entry
- no robbery
- or no crime was committed or attempted

in or at the premises, which would have activated a properly functioning Alarm System.



# WHAT IS NOT A FALSE ALARM?

A *False Alarm* does not include-

- Weather: signals activated by unusually violent conditions of nature
- Extraordinary circumstances outside of the Alarm User's control



# FALSE ALARMS: THE PROBLEM

- The Maricopa Police Department responds to 1,100 alarm calls on average every year.
- Of these alarm calls, 95% on average were determined to be false alarms.
- Police officers spend approximately 600 hours a year responding to false alarms, wasting time and tax payer money.



# FALSE ALARMS: THE PROBLEM

- *Alarm Systems*, if used properly, are one of the most effective ways to deter break-ins and burglaries

## BUT FALSE ALARMS:

- waste taxpayer money
- waste law enforcement resources
- slow down officer's response time to real emergencies
- may cause officers to become complacent in responding to alarms



# HOW TO PREVENT FALSE ALARMS

The number one cause of *False Alarms* is human error. Someone uses the Alarm System who was not properly trained or familiar with the system.

Be sure to train-

- House sitters
- Baby sitters
- Children
- Relatives
- Neighbors
- Realtors

and anyone who has a key to your home on how to properly enable and disable the system, including the proper alarm codes and passwords.





# HOW TO PREVENT FALSE ALARMS

Not maintaining your Alarm System can also cause ***False Alarms***. Make sure you inspect your Alarm System by-

- following your Alarm Company's instructions to test the system – do not test the system by purposely setting it off
- having your Alarm Company replace batteries as needed
- getting a yearly inspection of the system



# HOW TO PREVENT FALSE ALARMS

Take the time to identify any potential hazards in your home that may set off your Alarm System, resulting in **False Alarms.**

- Unlocked, loose fitting or open doors and windows
- Pets
- Balloons
- Toys
- Curtains or plants that can move while a fan is on or a window is open
- Holiday Decorations



# HOW TO PREVENT FALSE ALARMS

Take the time to identify any potential hazards at your business that may set off your Alarm System, resulting in **False Alarms.**

- Swinging doors or windows
- Banners and Signs
- Plants and Curtains that can move in a draft
- Stacked items that may fall over
- Unsupervised guests
- Holiday decorations



# HOW TO PREVENT FALSE ALARMS

Pets are also a leading cause of motion sensor activations, resulting in *False Alarms*.

- Keep pets in an area of the residence that does not have motion sensors, or use “pet friendly” sensors
- Ensure your Alarm Company knows how many and what kind of pets are in the home
- Your Alarm Company can make recommendations for the best equipment to use with pets in the home.



# HOW TO PREVENT FALSE ALARMS

**Know your codes!** The number one way to prevent police response to a residence is to have the proper codes when contacted from your Alarm Company.

- Ensure all authorized persons know the key panel code as well as the verbal pass code
- Do not make the code something an intruder would guess (do not use the house address)
- If the codes are updated, ensure all authorized responsible parties are informed



# THE ALARM SYSTEMS ORDINANCE

- Amendments were made to the Alarm System Ordinance to-
  - Ensure alarm users are educated regarding their obligation
  - Simplify the alarm permitting process
  - Reduce the number of false alarm calls requiring police response
  - Ensure access to responsible account information for contact when necessary
  - Increase officer and citizen safety
- Amendments were adopted by Maricopa City Council on September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- The updated ordinance became effective October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018



# THE ALARM SYSTEMS ORDINANCE

Each Alarm System must be registered with the City of Maricopa Police Department



# THE ALARM SYSTEMS ORDINANCE

## Obtaining an Alarm Permit

- An **Alarm Permit** is required within 10 days from the date of installation OR 30 days from obtaining possession of a property with an Alarm System previously installed. **Alarm Permits** are not transferable.
- **Alarm Permits** are valid for 12 months from the date of application





# THE ALARM SYSTEMS ORDINANCE

## Obtaining an Alarm Permit

- Every residential and commercial building with an **Alarm System**, whether the system is monitored or not, **MUST** obtain an **Alarm Permit**
- Apply for an **Alarm Permit** through the [SMARTGov portal](#) on the City of Maricopa web page



# THE ALARM SYSTEMS ORDINANCE

## What does it cost?

- Each **Alarm Permit** is \$20
- Failure to obtain an **Alarm Permit** is a \$100 fine. This fee can be waived if an **Alarm Permit** is obtained within 14 days of notification



# THE ALARM SYSTEMS ORDINANCE

## False Alarm Fees

ALARM ENFORCEMENT Number of Alarms	PENALTY
1	No fine if Alarm User Awareness Training completed
2	\$50.00
3	\$100.00
4-7	\$200.00
8+	Suspension
Failure to obtain an Alarm Permit	\$100.00

Payments must be made within 30 days of the date of invoice. If an invoice remains unpaid, a \$5 late fee will be assessed for every 30 days the account remains delinquent.



# THE ALARM SYSTEMS ORDINANCE

## Suspensions

- Police response will be suspended after eight (8) **False Alarms** in a twelve (12) month period
- Failure to make payment of any civil penalty(ies) within ninety (90) days of the date of notice, may result in discontinuance of law enforcement response
- Police will still respond to duress, holdup, robbery, and panic alarms for suspended accounts



# THE ALARM SYSTEMS ORDINANCE

## Appeals

- Assessment of civil penalty(ies) for false alarms may be appealed by submitting a False Alarm Appeal Form within ten (10) days of the date of notice
- Failure to submit an appeal within this time period shall constitute a waiver of the right to contest the assessment of fees or civil penalty(ies)



# CONTACT INFORMATION

City of Maricopa Police Department

Attn: Alarm Administrator

39675 W. Civic Center Plaza South

Maricopa, AZ 85138

[alarm@maricopa-az.gov](mailto:alarm@maricopa-az.gov)



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I \_\_\_\_\_, the Alarm User and Permit Holder for Alarm Permit \_\_\_\_\_  
(Your Name) (Alarm Permit Number)  
located at \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge I reviewed the  
(Property Address)

**Alarm User Awareness Class Training in its entirety. I understand completing the Alarm User Awareness School Class will only waive one (1) false alarm assessment, up to \$75.00 within a 12 month period.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

Make sure this acknowledgement is sent to the Alarm Administrator (contact information below) within 30 days of the date of your False Alarm notice, otherwise a civil penalty will be assessed for the false alarm.

City of Maricopa Police Department  
Attn: Alarm Administrator  
39675 W. Civic Center Plaza South  
Maricopa, AZ 85138  
alarm@maricopa-az.gov