

# HOW TO REDUCE OR PREVENT FALSE ALARMS

## FALSE ALARMS ARE A SERIOUS PROBLEM

When police are dispatched to the scene of a burglary, about 97% of cases turn out to be false alarms. Authorities must determine the appropriate response to millions of alarms each year around the world. If most calls by police teams and fire emergency personnel are unwarranted, this represents a tremendous waste of public money.

False alarms are also a serious family or business problem. They lead to neighbors ignoring your alarm; and reluctance on your part to use your alarm makes your home, business or property vulnerable to theft or fire, and possibly uninsurable.

Recently alarm owners have been challenged, as municipalities now often levy fines for false alarms, or withhold response. In some places it's three times and you're out; or three times and you're required to take a two-hour false alarm prevention course before the city agrees to dispatch vital emergency services to your premise again.



### By reviewing the tips below you should be able to avoid these difficulties.

1. Many false alarms (49%) are caused by forgotten arm/disarm codes. Memorize your keypad and security pass codes or create a system to help you remember them. But keep them secret from others. Avoid writing them down where they can be found. Avoid leaving them in an obvious place like the closest drawer to the keypad.
2. Ensure that each user of your system, including anyone with a key, knows their arm/disarm and security pass codes and is fully trained on how to use the system. They should also know where to quickly find the phone number of your central monitoring station.
3. Ensure that all users fully understand the 'Stay' and 'Away' functions as described in the instruction manual. If you need a new instruction manual please visit the DSC North American website at [www.dsc.com](http://www.dsc.com) and enter the Technical Support area.
4. If you make a mistake when pressing keys on your keypad, press the [#] key and start again.

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5. If you accidentally set off the alarm, wait two to five minutes for the central monitoring station to call you. If they don't, the system may not be working correctly. You should therefore call the central monitoring station and report the incident, rather than simply re-arming the system and exiting. This will prevent system vulnerability, or prevent monitoring personnel from wrongfully dispatching emergency services.
6. If you do not have enough time to comfortably enter and exit within the pre-programmed delay periods, ask your alarm company to adjust them.
7. Other reasons to notify your alarm company: New employees or contractors, new pets, vacations, remodeling, fumigation, phone system changes, a decision to sell, or if you think your system isn't working properly or doesn't suit your security needs.
8. If motion detectors are installed and you purchase a pet, ask your alarm company whether pet-immune detectors have been installed. Do not leave helium-filled balloons behind in the premise. Make certain posters are well affixed to walls and that plants or curtains cannot be blown by the wind.
9. Repair loose-fitting windows and doors and close them properly before arming the system.
10. Change the batteries in your system.
11. Test the system each month. Before the test, notify the central monitoring station. Then, with the system in the 'Ready' state, perform a bell/battery test by entering [\*][6][Master Code][4] (PowerSeries). The bell and keypad buzzer will sound for two seconds and all keypad lights will turn ON. Press [#] to exit. Activate each sensor in turn (i.e. open a window/door or walk in motion detector areas). Ensure that each sensor shows open on the keypad when the sensor is open or a motion detector sees motion, and restores when the sensor is closed. If the panel has any fire zones, activation will cause the alarm signal to sound in a pulsed mode. When testing is complete, call and advise the central monitoring station. Should the system fail to function properly, contact your installation company.
12. Test any new user codes to ensure they function for arming and disarming.
13. Ask your alarm company about DSC alarm verification technologies such as our new CP-01 compliant control panels, two-way audio verification or our new, more economical, visual verification solution.

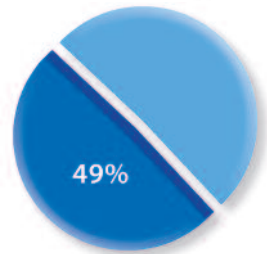
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## MORE FALSE ALARM STATISTICS:\*

### Keypad

- 49% of the time the wrong code was entered and 9% of the time no code was entered.
- 26% of the time users ran out of delay times (entry delay 17%, exit delay 9%).
- 16% of the time users erroneously believed the system was in 'Ready' mode.
- 26% of the time users accidentally armed their system in the 'Away' mode instead of the 'Stay' mode and then remained on-site.



### Other Problems

- 59% of the time something was wrong at one of the doors.
- 20% happened because a motion detector detected something that was incorrectly identified as a burglar.
- 16% happened because a person was frightened and pressed the panic button without sufficient rationale.



For further information, please contact the DSC Customer Help Center at 888-888-7838.

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\*According to the TFS Research Project 2004/2005



## FALSE ALARM PREVENTION IDEAS FOR INSTALLERS

More people buy alarm systems and monitoring services when they are easy to use and reliable. One of the biggest challenges in the security industry is false alarm reduction. Statistics show most false alarms are caused by customers who need more advice about how to use their alarm system.

Properly educating customers, as well as installing and programming the system correctly, can help address the false alarm problem and generate more security alarm business.

### **Following the installer tips below will help reduce false alarms.**

1. Always advise users that most false alarms are caused by forgotten arm/disarm and security pass codes. They must be serious about memorizing their codes.
2. Ensure that the entry and exit times are sufficient. Program the central monitoring station phone number to appear on the display.
3. Ensure that the Audible Exit Fault is enabled and explained to the user. The Audible Exit Fault means that if a delay zone is still open at the end of the exit delay, or 5 seconds after the exit delay, an entry delay will sound on the siren as well as the keypad buzzer. The additional sound will draw more attention and the system is more likely to be disarmed before the system goes into alarm.
4. If wireless zones are installed, ensure that all devices are placement-tested for a good location. Although wireless zones may work after they have been programmed and installed, all wireless devices should be placement-tested in installer level programming mode a placement test will verify the signal strength of each wireless device. If the device tests BAD, the device should be moved, the receiver should be moved, or an additional receiver should be added until a GOOD placement test is received.
5. Ensure exit delay beeps are programmed as audible. Audible exit beeps will sound the keypad buzzer during exit delay, once every 10 seconds and once every second for the last 10 seconds of exit delay.

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6. Cross-zoning can be used on products that support this feature. When enabled, two cross-zones must go into alarm within the programmed cross-zone time period for the system to transmit the police code alarm.
7. Swinger shutdown can be enabled by zone and is used to prevent runaway transmissions to the central monitoring station. If a zone goes into runaway and constantly transmits zone alarms and restores, the system can be programmed to only transmit a set number of alarms and restore transmissions within an armed or 24-hour period.
8. Use a delayed fire zone to provide a 30-second delay before communicating to the central monitoring station. This delay can be used to help prevent false alarm transmissions for instances such as burnt toast.
9. For new system users it is a good idea to program zone transmission delays for a short period of time after the alarm system is purchased. This feature is programmable by zone and will delay the transmission of the zone alarm until the elapsed zone transmission delay timer expires. If a zone goes into alarm and the system is disarmed before the timer expires, no zone alarm will be transmitted to the central monitoring station.
10. To assist with notification of the status of the alarm system, it may be a good idea to install an additional system status module such as the DSC PC5601 that can be placed in the garage, or near an entry point to indicate if the system is armed.
11. Ensure the motion detectors that look at keypads are set for 'Force' arm. The Force feature is programmable by zone, and allows the system to be armed with the force arm zones open. This means the user needn't attempt to stand still for a ready light when arming the system.
12. Install pet-immune motion detectors. Even if the user does not have any pets at the time the system is installed, it is a good idea to install pet immune motion detectors in case the user purchases a pet at a later date. This will help prevent false alarms, and will also prevent a future service call to install pet immune motion detectors if the customer does purchase a pet.
13. Install a two-way voice verification product such as the DSC PC5900.
14. Install a video verification product such as the VVM110 from DSC. It installs at a fraction of the cost of most CCTV systems and helps prevent false dispatches, while offering monitoring of businesses, 'look-in' on children, nannies and the elderly. Numerous business management and central monitoring services can be provided.