HOW THE LAW WORKS

Every alarm user is allowed two "free" false alarms in a calendar year. On the third false alarm in a calendar year, two things happen. First, the alarm user must have the alarm system inspected by a licensed alarm company. The purpose of this inspection is to ensure that all mechanical components of the alarm system are in good operating condition, as well as afford your alarm company an opportunity to re-educate all those using the system on its proper use.

Second, when an alarm user has three false alarms in a calendar year, false alarm response fees are imposed. The false alarm response fee for residential and commercial alarm users begins at $50.00 for the third false alarm. Fees will escalate to $1000 ***per false alarm*** for residential alarm users and $4000 ***per false alarm*** for commercial alarm users. Please refer to the False Alarm Response Fee Schedule on the back panel of this brochure for more detailed information.

On the sixth false alarm in a calendar year, the alarm user must have the alarm system upgraded to meet current County installation standards.

You will be considered in violation of the alarm law ***if you fail to***:

- register your alarm system,
- pay imposed false alarm response fees, or
- upgrade the alarm system, as required.

Alarm companies are prohibited from requesting dispatch for seven days after registration of an alarm system, unless there is a waiver granted by the FARU due to imminent danger to people or property. This is referred to as a "burn-in" or "soak" period.

Cover drawing of Montgomery County Police

FALSE ALARM RESPONSE FEE SCHEDULE

Below are fees charged to alarm users for police response to false alarm activations. Fees apply only if the police are dispatched to the alarm location and the alarm signal is false.

RESIDENTIAL FALSE ALARM RESPONSE FEES

False Alarm Occurrence	False Alarm Response Fee	Cumulative Total
1st	$ 0	$ 0
2nd	0	0
3rd	50	50
3rd - Inspection of System Required + Fee		
4th	75.00	125.00
5th	100.00	225.00
6th	150.00	375.00
6th - Upgrade of System Required + Fee		
7th	200.00	575.00
8th	250.00	825.00
9th	300.00	1125.00
10th	400.00	1525.00
11th	500.00	2025.00
12th	600.00	2625.00
13th	700.00	3325.00
14th	800.00	4125.00
15th & Up	1000.00	5125.00

NON-RESIDENTIAL FALSE ALARM RESPONSE FEES

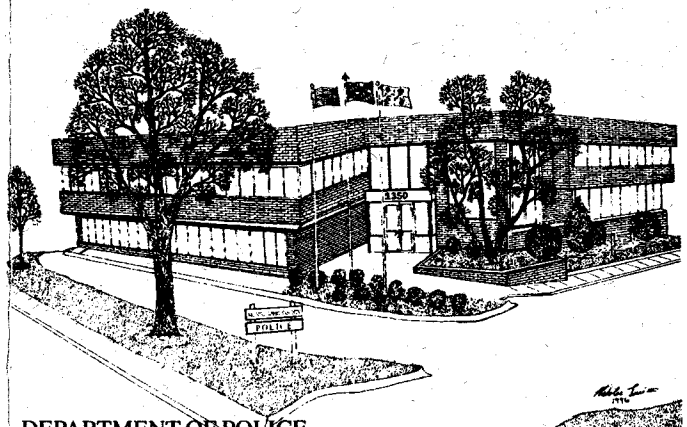
(False Alarms 1-15 Same as Above)

16th	$1500.00	$6625.00
17th	2000.00	8625.00
18th	2500.00	11125.00
19th	3000.00	14125.00
20th & Up	4000.00	18125.00

Montgomery County, Maryland
Department of Police

False Alarm Reduction Unit

Burglar Alarm Law



DEPARTMENT OF POLICE
FALSE ALARM REDUCTION UNIT
255 N. Washington Street, #303
Rockville, MD 20850

BACKGROUND

The Montgomery County Police are requested to respond to over 40,000 false alarms each year. Alarm legislation was adopted because of concerns over police officer safety and to eliminate the misuse of police resources, which results in the waste of approximately 20 work years of police officer time and costs millions of dollars annually. Unfounded alarm calls reduce the police department's effectiveness and undermines our ability to respond to more critical calls.

FALSE ALARM REDUCTION UNIT

The False Alarm Reduction Unit (FARU) of the Montgomery County Department of Police was created to administer the County's alarm law. The FARU's main function is to reduce the number of false alarms to which police respond each year. The FARU licenses alarm companies, registers alarm users, sends notification of false alarms and bills for excessive false alarms to alarm users, ensures that appropriate inspections and upgrades of alarm systems occur, and handles informal appeals regarding the false designation of alarm activations.

WHAT IS A FALSE ALARM?

The alarm law defines a false alarm as ***any alarm signal that elicits a response by police personnel and for which there is no evidence of criminal activity to justify a police response.*** This simply means that if a police officer responds to an alarm signal and, after investigation finds no evidence that criminal activity either had occurred or was occurring, the officer will designate the alarm signal as a false alarm. A false alarm may be caused by factors such as human error or equipment malfunction.

ALARM USER REGISTRATION

◆ Every *burglar alarm* must be registered with the FARU ***before*** the system is placed into service. Registration does ***not*** apply to either fire or car alarm systems.

◆ It is your alarm/monitoring company's responsibility to provide you with burglar alarm registration information at the time of sale or installation of your alarm system. Every alarm/monitoring company that conducts business within Montgomery County must be licensed by the FARU and must provide their license number and your registration number to ECC operators when requesting dispatch to an alarm activation.

◆ If you do not have an alarm/monitoring company, you may obtain registration information directly from the FARU.

◆ A non-refundable, one-time $30.00 registration fee must be paid with each registration form. A separate registration must be obtained for each alarm user and/or location.

◆ Alarm registrations are not transferable from one alarm user to another or from one location to another. However, if you change alarm companies, mailing address or contact person information, you are **not** required to re-register your alarm system. You are required to advise the FARU in writing of said change(s).

◆ You and/or your alarm company must notify the FARU when there is a relocation or change in ownership. The old registration must be cancelled and a new one issued.

◆ Residents of the incorporated areas of Takoma Park and Chevy Chase Village are

WHAT YOUR ALARM COMPANY SHOULD DO FOR YOU

In an effort to reduce false alarms, your alarm company is required, by law, to take certain proactive measures.

1. Your alarm/monitoring company must attempt to verify every alarm signal, except duress or hold-up, *before* requesting police dispatch.

2. If it is determined that an alarm signal is false, your alarm/monitoring company *must* immediately attempt to cancel the police dispatch. ***Don't let your alarm company tell you that this cannot be done.*** You cannot personally cancel a police dispatch unless you initiated the call.

3. Your alarm company must notify you, in writing, within 72 hours, if they have requested a police dispatch to your alarm location.

4. Your alarm company must not request police dispatch to an alarm activation until the alarm system is properly registered.

5. When you have a new alarm system installed in your home or business, your alarm company must provide you with a completed and signed Installation Certificate. This Certificate affirms that:

◆ the system meets or exceeds installation standards,

◆ all persons responsible for the operation of the system have been fully trained on its proper use, and

◆ the alarm business has explained the requirements for registration and has completed and provided the alarm user with a copy of the registration form.