



Checklist to Reduce False Alarms

Fire alarms systems are important in providing occupants of buildings prompt warning if a fire occurs. Alarms that function properly can save lives and property! Systems that are not installed or maintained properly can cause false alarms. False alarms are typically 20-25% of our annual fire-related calls for service.

What this means is that citizens in the community that need help, may not get the help they need. Firefighters are trying to get to the scene as fast as they can. This means they are putting other drivers and themselves at risk with an emergency response that is unnecessary.

What you do to help reduce the number of false alarms can reduce injuries, accidents and can mean the difference between life and death for you, your neighbors and others in your community. Weather conditions and other occurrences out of your control can cause false alarms. However, most of the time the false alarms can be avoided.



Be in the 'Know'

Does management, key leadership staff, maintenance and building staff know and understand how the system works? Make sure everyone understands how the system functions. Some systems are monitored systems with automatic notification of your alarm company who notifies the 9-1-1 dispatch center. Be sure to understand the working of the system and share it with key personnel. This will help to support avoidance of false alarms.



Schedule Regular Maintenance

Ensure regular maintenance to your system. Avoid only servicing the system when something goes wrong. Stay on a schedule to avoid system issues. Regular maintenance often is required by code. Check with us regarding municipal code requirements.



Testing 1-2-3

Test your alarm frequently. Testing will prevent assuming that everything is working—only to find out there is a problem when it is too late. When testing the system your monitoring agency needs to be notified. The Appleton Fire Department also needs to be contacted—both prior to the test and after completing the test. Testing of the system may be required by code. Check with us regarding municipal code requirements.



Dust in the Wind

Do not run equipment inside the building that emits fumes or dust where smoke detectors are fitted.



Know your Wiring

Ensure maintenance workers and other contractors do not cut or interfere with fire alarm cabling.



Construction or Remodeling?

Be sure to cover smoke detectors in affected areas to prevent false alarms. Clean detectors following remodeling to remove buildup of dust and dirt. Be sure to test and check all detectors after completing a project.



Ask for Help

Do you need help in understanding how your fire alarms system works? Ask for help to understand your system and avoid false alarms. The organization that installed your system can be a resource. We can also offer options for you to get help.

Avoid false alarms, possible false alarm fees and problems by reviewing this checklist. If you still need additional information, contact the Prevention Bureau at the Appleton Fire Department: