



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Jacksonville's Alarm Program

The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office receives more than 45,000 alarm calls each year and more than 98% of them are false alarms. In an effort to reduce the false alarm rate in Jacksonville a new alarm registration program was implemented in May 2017. One key element in reducing false alarm calls for police comes from having *current contact information* that alarm users *update each year*. We will also help reduce false alarms by requiring all locations with repeat false alarm infractions to be accountable for faulty equipment. All residential and business alarms must be registered in the new system by the owner by Thursday, August 31, 2017 to avoid penalties.

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### Here are some of the most often asked questions and answers:

**I've had my alarm system for years OR I have both a business alarm and residential alarm. Do I need to register?** YES, every individual residence and business that has an alarm must register in the new registration database. All alarm users are required to register by Thursday, August 31, 2017.

**Where do I go to register?** Online. You can access the registration page two different ways:

1. By visiting JSO's website [www.jaxsheriff.org](http://www.jaxsheriff.org) and selecting "Register Your Alarm" under the "Important Information" section in the *middle of the homepage*. You will migrate away to the registration page.
2. Go directly to:  
[https://www.cityalarmpermit.com/FAMS/Citizen/City/Jacksonville/ATB\\_Login.aspx](https://www.cityalarmpermit.com/FAMS/Citizen/City/Jacksonville/ATB_Login.aspx)

*If you are not able to register online you may also visit any JSO substation for a print out of the application, to fill it out and mail it in.*

**Does it cost money?** YES, there is a **onetime** \$10 fee (plus \$3 online fee) to register each existing property that utilizes an alarm, whether it is monitored by an alarm company or not. This needs to be completed by Thursday, August 31, 2017. Once you are registered in the new system you will receive a reminder each year to update your information. The reminder will be sent by email if an email address is provided. If an email address has not been provided you will receive a letter in the mail. There will be no additional fee if annually you confirm the property information is the same and update your contact information within 30 days of receiving your annual notification. If the information is not updated within 30 days of your annual notification,

the residential and commercial locations will be charged \$20 for the update (instead of NO CHARGE (\$0) if completed within 30 days of receiving renewal notification).

**If I mail in the application with a check where am I sending it to?** You will mail the Permit Application to: P.O. Box 141925, Irving, TX 75014. The application is clearly marked with this address.

**Will I get a new blue decal?** No. Decals are no longer used for Jacksonville's Alarm Program and the old decal numbers will not be used in the new system. However, you can keep your decal on your window if you have an old registration. Again, none of the permit numbers from the old system are used in the new program.

**What happens if I move?** Alarm registrations cannot be transferred to another person or location. You will need to register the alarm (as a new alarm) at your new location within 30 days of installation.

**What is the initial setup fee for a new alarm?** The initial registration fee for residential and commercial location is \$10 (plus \$3 online fee) if completed within 30 days from the alarm installation date. After 30 days the registration fee is \$20.

**Who can I speak to if I have questions or I'm having trouble registering?** Call 1 (877) 883-0677.

**What is a false alarm?** Jacksonville, FL has adopted a false alarm ordinance Chapter 168 concerning the regulation of alarm systems and response to false alarms within the City. An alarm is false within the meaning of this chapter when, upon inspection by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, evidence indicates that no unauthorized entry, robbery, or other such crime was committed or attempted in or on the premises which would have activated a properly functioning Alarm System. False alarms in Jacksonville account for more than 36,000 hours of police time annually all spent on calls that have no beneficial outcome to the resident, business owner or community.

#### **What are the major causes of false alarms?**

The three Major Causes of False Alarms are:

1. User errors
2. Installation or service errors
3. Equipment failures

Other reasons for false alarms:

1. Inadequate training of people allowed access to your security system - children, neighbors, cleaning personnel, real estate agents, guests, relatives, babysitters, service and delivery personnel, etc.
2. Weak system batteries
3. Open, unlocked or loose fitting doors and windows.
4. Drafts from heaters and air conditioning systems that move plants, curtains, balloons, etc.
5. Wandering pets

### **How many false alarm calls am I permitted each year before receiving a fine?**

An Alarm user shall be subject to fines, depending on the number of false alarms within the permit year, based upon the following schedule:

Burglary/Robbery/Panic - Residential/Commercial Fine Schedule

- 1st false alarm: No charge
- 2nd false alarm: No charge
- 3rd false alarm: \$50.00
- 4th false alarm: \$100.00
- 5th false alarm: \$150.00
- 6th false alarm: \$250.00
- 7th false alarm and above - Jacksonville Sheriff's Office will not respond to burglar alarm calls but will continue to respond to panic or robbery alarm calls and the alarm user will be charged \$250.00 for each false alarm, after that.

The alarm user can complete an online alarm awareness class once every 24 months to receive a waiver of up to \$100.00 in the false alarm fines within 30 days from the invoice date.

Additionally, Jacksonville Sheriff's Office will not respond to burglar alarm calls to locations which:

- Do not have an active registration, after notification of 30 days
- Have not paid the false alarm fine within 30 days of the invoice date
- FOR ALARM CONTRACTORS: If contracted properties are not registered after 30 day notification

### **How do I prevent a false alarm?**

- Before activating your system . . .
  - Lock all protected doors and windows.
  - Keep pets, balloons, fans, heaters, plants, curtains, seasonal decorations, etc. away from motion sensor areas.
  - Know how to cancel the alarm if the system activates.
- Educate alarm system users . . .

- All users, key holders or any person with legal access to your property must be thoroughly trained in how to operate your system, including knowledge of correct arming codes, pass codes, telephone numbers and procedures for canceling accidental alarm activations.
- Have your security company check and service your system regularly, routine maintenance can help prevent many false alarms.
- Notify your security company if . . .
  - You think, your system isn't working properly.
  - You plan any remodeling, including replacing doors or windows, hanging drywall, sanding floors, installing attic flooring or basement ceiling, changing phone systems, installing intercoms, siding, ceiling fans or skylights, fumigating, installing wiring or cable or other electronics, installing anything near the system control panel or keypads.
  - If you hire help for your residence or business, get a new pet, plan to sell your house, or are testing your system.
- Contact the alarm program if you have a phone service or name change, or if situations change, such as a disabled person now residing at the residence, etc.
- Your central monitoring station should not request a police dispatch for power outages, low battery signals or loss of telephone connections.
- Replace monitoring equipment with newer, high security monitoring technology. Dirty or wet phone lines, telephone repairmen and service interruptions do not require police response.
- Upgrade old alarm systems to current equipment conforming to Security Industry Association (SIA) false alarm prevention standards, further reducing false alarms.
- False alarms are costly and dangerous because they divert police officers from proactive crime prevention efforts. They also delay response to calls that may be true emergencies.
- False alarms are a nuisance to you and your neighbors.
- False alarms make your security system less reliable.
- False alarms make you reluctant to use your system.

**There is an alarm at my business. What do I need to know?**

- Be sure all employees are thoroughly trained before attempting to use the alarm system.
- Hold monthly training sessions to ensure alarm users are aware of: any changes to the system; the importance of careful pre-arming checks; designated entry/exit doors; proper opening/closing procedures; correct pass codes and arming codes; and rehearse how to cancel accidental activations.
- Watch out for holiday-related false alarms: thoroughly train temporary holiday employees; watch last minute schedule changes leading to inexperienced employees arming or disarming your system; be careful with the placement of seasonal

decorations; long hours and/or holiday parties can result in careless use of your alarm system by employees.

- Look for items that can move within the "view" of your motion detectors, causing false alarms (fans, heaters, hanging signs, seasonal decorations, balloons, curtains, plants, pets, etc.)
- Confirm that special consideration has been given to the installation of motion detectors in high bay areas with overhead doors, large exhaust fans or ceiling vents which allow entry of birds. Discuss with your alarm provider whether your location's environment requires specially designed and installed motion detectors that will prevent false alarms due to birds, wildlife, rodents, cats, etc.
- Ensure all doors and windows are secure and locked before arming your system.
- Ensure that floor mounted contacts are not being used on overhead/rollup doors. Instead, use track-mounted contacts by placing a track mounted contact on BOTH sides of the door tracks at 4-5 feet on one side and at 7-8 feet on the other side. Require that BOTH contacts must be activated to trigger the alarm. This will reduce and/or eliminate false alarms due to wind or shaking of the door. Have your alarm provider check the type and condition of contacts installed on your overhead doors.
- Don't change passcodes without advising your central monitoring station.
- Don't change passcodes and arming codes without advising the appropriate authorized users.
- Train new users thoroughly, notifying your monitoring station of new authorized users.
- Your central monitoring station should not request a police dispatch for power outages, low battery signals and loss of telephone connections.
- If you believe your alarm system is not working properly, immediately contact your alarm provider.
- Service and maintain your system (including batteries) regularly before false alarms occur.
- If your business requires wireless hold-up protection, use dual-action devices only.
- Replace old police department direct-connect monitoring equipment with newer, high security monitoring technology. Dirty or wet phone lines, telephone repairmen and service interruptions do not require police response!
- Upgrade old alarm systems to current equipment conforming to Security Industry Association (SIA) false alarm prevention standards, further reducing false alarms.