



Selling a Home Should Not be Alarming!

False burglar alarms are costly, dangerous and divert law enforcement officers from responding to true emergencies and engaging in crime prevention activities. Annually, law enforcement officers respond to millions of false alarm calls. What causes these false alarms and how can we reduce them?



Some false alarms are caused by real estate agents while they are showing properties. Generally, if a municipality has an alarm ordinance, any fees or fines for false alarm responses will be charged to the property owner. Should this happen, the property owner will likely hold the agency liable.

What Sellers Should Do

- Contact your alarm company to discuss disabling the burglar alarm system while your home is on the market. ***If your alarm system includes fire alarm monitoring, you should be explicit with your alarm company that the fire alarm system is to remain in service.*** Disabling the burglar alarm system will not only avoid police response to a false alarm, it may help sell your property because potential buyers are unlikely to spend much time at your home if the alarm is sounding.
- If you insist on leaving the system active:
 - Contact your monitoring company to advise that the property is on the market and that real estate agents will be in and out throughout the day. Set up special instructions so they may call you before they request dispatch on all burglar alarm activations. Ensure that the alarm company has up to date work, home and cell phone numbers for you.
 - Provide complete training to agents on how to properly turn the alarm system on and off. Remember, you, the property owner, will be responsible for penalties associated with false alarms.
 - Obtain a separate passcode and password for real estate agents who are allowed to enter the home during the sale period. Agents can use their codes to turn off the alarm system, cancel response and identify themselves to the alarm company as a valid alarm user.



What Listing Real Estate Agents Should Do

- ***Encourage the seller to disable the burglar alarm system while it is on the market.***
- If the alarm system is to remain active:
 - Include in the listing documents the fact that there is an active alarm system on site.
 - Educate real estate agents on how to arm and disarm the system and how to cancel a false alarm, should one occur.
 - If passcodes and passwords are not provided, ask the property owner what action should be taken if the alarm is activated accidentally. This may prompt the property owner to contact the alarm/monitoring company to set up "special instructions" with passcodes and passwords.

What Visiting Real Estate Agents Should Do

- Before you enter a property, find out if the property owner has an active alarm system installed.
- If there is an active alarm system, contact the listing agent to determine the proper procedures for entering the property.
 - Answer the phone at the site to prevent a police dispatch.
 - If you cause a false alarm, notify the listing agent and monitoring station immediately.



By taking these few simple steps and working closely together, the alarm user and real estate agents can reduce or eliminate false alarms thereby making law enforcement available for true emergencies.