

OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE
PROTOCOL
FOR RESPONDING TO BURGLAR ALARM CALLS
AND APPEAL PROCESS

When Primary Response is by Police:

- 1) Prior to requesting police response, alarm companies shall perform standard mandatory verification procedures. Failure to do so may result in the alarm being classified as “false” in the event the alarm company calls back to cancel.
- 2) The alarm monitoring company shall, upon calling police, immediately contact a keyholder who shall attend within 30 minutes.
- 3) The alarm monitoring company shall contact the police dispatch centre and inform them of the name of the keyholder and their estimated time of arrival at the alarm scene.
- 4) Officers attending the alarmed premises will perform a physical security check to ascertain whether a criminal act has been committed.
- 5) If there is no evidence of a criminal act, police may clear from the scene in the event the keyholder is not immediately available. Police will return to assist upon request of the keyholder after his/her arrival at the scene.
- 6) With police assistance, keyholders will be responsible for determining if there is any evidence of criminal activity. If no such activity is observed, the alarm will be designated as “false”.
- 7) In the event that a keyholder does not attend and police do not find evidence of criminal activity, the alarm will be designated as “false”. A subsequent appeal by the keyholder will be disallowed unless indisputable evidence of criminal activity is discovered and a police report made. The police report number must be furnished to the alarm management office before any appeal will be considered.

When Primary Response by an Agency Other Than Police:

The following protocol will be followed in all cases where an alternate response, such as a guard service, is used as a first response to burglar alarm activations.

- 1) Upon arrival at the alarmed premises, the guard service will be responsible for examining the property to determine if there are signs a criminal act has been committed.
- 2) In the event that there is no sign of criminal activity, police shall not be called.
- 3) If the guard service feels that a criminal act may have been committed, they shall arrange for police attendance through the alarm monitoring station.
- 4) Under circumstances as described in item 3) above, unless the guard service can provide full access the alarm monitoring station will make immediate arrangements for the attendance of a keyholder within 30 minutes as per section 5b) of the False Alarm Reduction By-law No. 1 of 1998.
- 5) In all cases, after a request for police attendance, the guard service shall remain at the scene and assist police upon their arrival by providing full details surrounding the alarm activation, including the reasons for suspecting criminal activity.
- 6) In the event that the premises are found to be insecure and a keyholder is not available as described under section 4) above, the guard service shall be responsible for safeguarding the premises until they can be properly secured.
- 7) With police assistance, keyholders will be responsible for determining if there is any evidence of criminal activity. If no such activity is observed, the alarm will be designated as "false".
- 8) In the event that a keyholder does not attend the premises, any appeal of a designation of the alarm call as "false" will be denied unless there is indisputable evidence of criminal activity and a police report has been made. The police report number must be furnished to the alarm management office prior to any appeal process being instigated.

Note: A report falsely made of criminal activity in order to avoid alarm response fees will be considered as “mischief” under the Criminal Code of Canada and may be subject to prosecution.

THE APPEAL PROCESS

Requirements for Appeals:

- 1) Appeals shall be submitted by the customer’s alarm company to the Ottawa Police Service Alarm Co-ordinator or the Assistant Alarm Co-ordinator.
- 2) Appeals must be in writing and must include grounds for appeal as described by the customer or the alarm company.
- 3) Full supporting documentation from the alarm company detailing actions taken (i.e. computer print-outs) must be submitted.
- 4) Appeals must be received by the alarm office within 72 hours of the alarm incident.

Police will leave false alarm notices where possible, however, alarm companies remain fully responsible for informing their customers of an alarm situation. A failure by an alarm company to inform their customer of an alarm activation will preclude an appeal being launched outside of the 72 hour requirement.

Definition of a False Alarm:

Before submitting an appeal, alarm companies should refer to the following definition of a false alarm, as set out in section 1(e) of the False Alarm Reduction By-law. Appeal of false alarms caused by situations described in the definition will not be considered.

- 1.(e) “False Alarm” means an alarm incident where there is no evidence that an unauthorized entry or unlawful act has been attempted or made into, on or in respect of a building, structure or premises and includes, but is not limited to:
 1. the activation of a security alarm system during its testing;
 2. a security alarm system activated by mechanical failure, malfunction or faulty equipment;

3. a security alarm system activated by atmospheric conditions, vibrations or power failure;
4. a security alarm system activated by user error.

Response:

The Alarm Management Section will deal with appeals as quickly as possible. It is the intent of the Alarm Section to deal with appeals within 5 working days, however, this may be negatively affected if large volumes of appeals are received.

Decisions will be forwarded to the alarm company via fax.