

Changes to Alarm Ordinance

Recently the City of Doral Policing Unit began tracking its alarm calls with computer software called “Cry Wolf.” The system is in use with Miami-Dade County and has been used in other jurisdictions throughout the United States. As with any new system there have been some minor issues concerning the application and its use.

In order to deal with some of these issues, we worked with the Office of the Manager and City Attorney to modify the alarm ordinance so as to provide our residents with a better service. The ordinance can be found at www.cityofdoral.com/alarm . The changes between the original ordinance and the modified ordinance are as follows:

- Eliminated the alarm sticker
- \$100 fine for failing to register and/or failing to renew an alarm system - \$25 registration fee and \$75 fine.
- Staggered Alarm registration renewals
- Late fee changed from 100 days to 90 days
- Require contact information for property owners
- Withholding business licenses for businesses that do not pay their alarm fines.

As you can see the changes are minimal and will dramatically help us improve our service delivery to you, our residents.

We have developed a *frequently asked question* segment to help clear our any lingering concerns; you can of course call us at 305-593-6699, extension 8005, if we have not been able to deal with your specific problem.

Current Alarm Registration Questions (FAQ)

Registration Issues

Fines and Fees

False Alarms

Tenants/Landlords/Rental Property

Registration Issues

My Alarm sticker is expired, I have renewed my alarm registration but I have not received a new 2007 Sticker.

We recently implemented a new tracking system called “Cry Wolf.” It tracks alarms by street address so stickers are no longer needed.

Why do I have to register my alarm with the City of Doral?

You must register your alarm with the City of Doral because you live within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Doral.

When does my registration expire?

Registrations are staggered. Home owner's registration expires on the registered person's birthday, similar to car tags. Businesses are staggered based on the alphabet: Business names beginning with the letters A through K expire January 31; Business names beginning with the letters L through Z expire March 31.

I registered my alarm with Dade County last month, why am I being fined for an unregistered alarm in the City of Doral?

You must register your alarm with the City of Doral because you are located within the boundaries of the City of Doral. The alarm registration is not transferable.

Do I have to register my car alarm?

No, car alarms do not need to be registered unless the vehicle is permanently located at a site.

How much does it cost to register an alarm system?

The cost is \$25.00 annually. If there were no false alarms during the calendar year, the renewal is free and automatic. If there were any changes in your registration, a new registration should be submitted within 10 days of the changes.

I am a homeowner association president, how can I get extra copies of the registration form?

Call or stop by the office for extra copies of the registration form.

Fines and Fees

Why do I have to pay a fine?

The Alarm Ordinance was adopted because of concerns over law enforcement safety and to eliminate the misuse of their resources. The primary commitment of the False Alarm Unit is to reduce the number of false alarms the police department responds to so that officers can concentrate on higher priority calls for service. A fine is a method of discouraging false alarms.

In 2006, police officers responded to approximately 8,800 burglar alarm calls in the City of Doral - 38 of those calls were burglaries. More than 99% of the 8,800 burglar alarm calls were false alarms!

How much are the fines?

Our Police response to your first three alarms are free. After the fourth false alarm the fine is \$100, fifth is \$200, sixth and each after that is \$300 for registered alarm systems. There are additional fines for an unregistered alarm system.

Where do I send my check?

*The mailing address is:
City of Doral False Alarm Unit
8300 NW 53 Street, #200
Doral, Florida, 33166*

Do you accept credit cards?

Yes, credit cards, debit cards, checks and cash.

The alarm company just installed my alarm and I am having trouble with it, who pays the false alarm fines?

Alarm fines are not assessed for the first 60 days after installation. The alarm system should be registered immediately after installation to take advantage of this.

Where does the money go from the fines?

This fee is used to offset the City's administrative costs of the program.

What will happen if I do not pay the alarm fines?

- *Failure to pay the alarm fines within 30 days will result in an additional fine of \$250.00.*
- *Failure to pay the fine within 90 days will result in an additional fee of 18% of the outstanding balance and a lien against the property.*
- *Business owners will not be permitted to renew their license to conduct business in the City of Doral.*

Alarms

What can I do to reduce false alarm calls?

- *Be aware !! Ensure all doors and windows are securely closed and locked – including the garage door.*
- *Keep pets, balloons, fans and heaters away from motion detectors.*
- *Ensure anyone with a key to your home or business is familiar with the alarm system and the proper operation.*
- *Ensure your address is clearly visible on the front of your building/home.*
- *Have your alarm company check and service the alarm system regularly.*
- *Consider using individual codes so you can identify who disarmed your alarm.*

I accidentally set the alarm off. My alarm company called and I gave the proper code but police officers still came to my house. I was billed for this. What should I do?

Even though you gave the proper code to the alarm company, you should say “Please do not send the police”. That will ensure the alarm company knows you are safe and do not need police assistance.

How soon will officers arrive after my alarm goes off?

Officers will arrive as soon as possible. You can assist the officers by making sure your address is clearly visible. Take a good look at the front of your home or business and the surrounding area.

- *Is there a street sign? Is it correct? If not, call the Association, property owner or City Public Works.*
- *Is your house number clearly displayed? Can you readily see it at night?*
- *Is the business name clearly marked on the front and back of your building?*
- *Is there a suite number or apartment number? Is the number clearly displayed?*
- *Is the name on the business the same name the alarm company will give to the police department?*
- *Call your alarm company and ask them what information they will give the police department.*
- *Make sure the address is correct.*

Will officers check the whole house?

Yes, officers will check all accessible areas. If you keep a dog in the back or side yard, there should be signs posted.

I accidentally hit the panic alarm, how do I cancel a police response?

Check with your alarm company, most alarm companies will not cancel a panic alarm.

Why do I have to attend a meeting after the seventh false alarm?

There is reason to believe any alarm system that experiences seven or more false alarms within a registration year is not being maintained in a manner that ensures proper operation. A review will be conducted with Code Compliance and a Crime Prevention

Officer. Failure to attend the meeting or comply with recommended improvements will result in a \$200 fine for each additional false alarm.

Can I appeal a false alarm?

Yes, within 10 days of receiving the letter from the City, write a letter to the City of Doral Alarm Unit requesting a review with the reasons for the appeal, enclose a check for \$50.00 and mail it or bring it to the office.

Who has the final say in an appeal?

The City appoints a Special Master to hear the appeal. The Special Master's decision is final.

Tenants/Landlords/Property Rental

I am a tenant, and I did not activate the alarm, why am I being billed for false alarms?

Call the alarm company and have the alarm changed to your name, if you want to continue the alarm service. If not, make sure it is deactivated.

I am a landlord, am I expected to do anything special for my tenants?

The owner or property manager of rental property shall obtain a master alarm registration form from the City for any alarms operated on their premises. The owner or property manager will be responsible for any alarm systems in common areas, offices, storage areas, equipment areas and vacant units.

I am a property owner and my tenant has a number of false alarms, why am I being held responsible?

The property owner is always responsible for the property.