



*Alemany Building Solutions, Corp.
1414 NW 107 Ave
suite 207 Doral,
Florida 33172*

Steps to prevent False Alarms

Dust and smoke detectors don't get along. Dust looks just like smoke to a smoke detector. If you are spray painting, sanding floors, installing new drywall or doing anything else that produces visible dust, there is a good chance that you will set off a smoke detector. Check with your alarm company before doing anything which will produce dust. TIP: Use your vacuum cleaner to clean your smoke alarm detectors monthly. Even ordinary household dust can build up over time and cause false alarms.

Educate contractors, tenants and building staff, including operators, cleaners and security, regarding when to put the fire alarm system on test and subsequent safety procedures to be followed.

Notify your alarm company before testing or repairing the system. It sounds obvious, but sometimes people forget to make the call in order to put the system on test.

Treat your system with care. Wiring and detection devices can be accidentally damaged and false alarms can result. Notify your alarm company of any damage and never attempt to repair the system yourself.

Make sure the alarm company has your contact information. Many calls we respond to the 'responsible party' information is not available. Once informed of an alarm, the Fire Department is obligated to attend the scene even if it has been confirmed on site false alarm. If no one is on site, the alarm company needs your contact information to inform you of the alarm and the Fire Department might require your assistance gaining entrance into the building.



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Be sure any 'Hot Works' activities (any type of work using open flames or producing heat or sparks such as cutting, welding, soldering, brazing, grinding, adhesive bonding, thermal spraying and thawing pipes) comply with specific Fire Code regulations.

Monitor the use of portable cooking devices such as toasters, toaster ovens and microwaves. If you are a property owner or manager, consider the inclusion of a clause in the tenant to make these parties responsible for any fees for alarms they may cause.

By following the steps above you can greatly reduce the risk of false alarms and therefore avoid the hassle and expense these can bring.

False Alarms

There are somewhere between 200 and 250 calls for residential or commercial false alarms each year. Responding to false alarms can be costly to the Town, especially if they could have been prevented. With the growing number of new homes and businesses in the past 10 years, there has been a very large increase in the number of alarm investigations.

If you would like more information regarding false alarms, please contact the Miami Dade Fire Department or visit the website www.miamidade.gov/fire.

If you need additional help on false fire alarm prevention, please contact us in order to schedule a small training for you or your tenants.

