

## HOW THE ORDINANCE WORKS

The Indian River County Sheriff's Office would prefer that every alarm user experience ZERO false alarms. However, the Alarm Ordinance does provide for two "free" false alarms in a calendar year. On the third false alarm in a calendar year, the alarm user will be fined \$50.00. This fine may be waived by attending a False Alarm Awareness School. False alarm dispatch number four requires a MANDATORY attendance in False Alarm Awareness School and a fine of \$100.00. False alarm number five is a fine of \$250.00 and revocation of permit. Any subsequent false dispatches will be fined as operating a non-permitted system additional violation fees will apply accordingly.

You will be considered in violation of the Ordinance **IF YOU FAIL TO:**

- \* Register your alarm system
- \* Renew your annual registration
- \* Pay imposed false alarm fines
- \* Continue to operate with a suspended or revoked permit, or
- \* Provide truthful information on the registration.

If there is reason to believe that an alarm system is not being used or maintained in a manner that ensures proper operation and suppresses false alarms, the Alarm Administrator may require a conference with an alarm user and the alarm business responsible for the repair of the alarm system to review the circumstances of each false alarm.

An alarm user may appeal assessment of a fine to the Alarm Review Board by filing a written request for a hearing setting forth the reasons for the appeal within ten working days after receipt of the fine. The filing of a request for an appeal hearing with the Alarm Review Board stays the assessment of the fine until the Alarm Review Board makes a decision.

## FINES & FEES

Below are fines chargeable for false alarm activations. Fines apply **ONLY IF THE Sheriff's Office is dispatched, arrives on the locations and the alarm signal is false.**

### FALSE ALARM OCCURRENCE                      FINE

False Alarm Dispatch #1 Written Notice    NO FINE  
False Alarm Dispatch #2 Written Notice    NO FINE

False Alarm Dispatch #3 Written Notice    \$ 50.00  
**Fine may be waived is the False Alarm Awareness School is attended.**

False Alarm Dispatch #4 Written Notice    \$100.00  
**Fine and MANDATORY school attendance.**

False Alarm Dispatch #5 & Above Written Notice  
Revocation of Permit AND \$250.00

Operating a non-permitted alarm system (whether revoked, suspended or never acquired) will be subject to a Citation and Assessment of a \$50.00 fine and must register with the Alarm Administrator within thirty days after such violation.

Subsequent false dispatches while operating a non-permitted system may result in additional fines.

Failure to provide information by the alarm company to the user/registrant                      \$ 90.00

### FEES

Annual fee for Alarm Permit                      \$ 30.00  
Annual renewal                                      \$ 30.00

**IF YOU ARE "FALSE ALARM FREE" FOR ONE (1) YEAR, RENEWAL IS WAIVED.**

Apartment Complex Fee    \$100.00 + \$10.00/Unit  
Alarm Transfer Fee, (new owner/user)    \$ 30.00  
False Alarm Awareness School              \$ 35.00

# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY FALSE ALARM ORDINANCE

## INFORMATION BROCHURE



Indian River County Sheriff's Office  
False Alarm Reduction Office  
FARO  
4055 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue  
Vero Beach, FL 32960

For additional information concerning the Indian River County Alarm Ordinance, contact:

Pete Kersey  
Alarm Administrator  
False Alarm Reduction Office  
(561) 978-6420 or (561-978-6421

## BACKGROUND

The Indian River County Sheriff's Deputies respond to over 10,000 alarms each year. False alarm legislature was adopted because of concerns over officer safety and to eliminate the misuse of law enforcement resources, which equates to six full time deputies per year. Unfounded alarm calls reduce the Sheriff's Office's effectiveness and undermines our ability to respond to more critical calls.

### FALSE ALARM REDUCTION OFFICE

The False Alarm Reduction Office, (FARO), of the Indian River County Sheriff's Office was created to administer the County's Alarm Ordinance. The Ordinance, 99-21, allows for the issuance of permits, establishes fees, provides penalties for violations, establishes a system of administration, and sets conditions for suspension or loss of permits.

The FARO's main function is to educate and encourage alarm users and alarm businesses to maintain the operational reliability of alarms by proper use of alarm systems and to reduce or eliminate false dispatch requests.

### WHAT IS A FALSE ALARM?

The False Alarm Ordinance defines a false alarm as **"any alarm signal that elicits a response by law enforcement personnel and which there is no evidence of criminal activity to justify a law enforcement response."** This simply means that if a law enforcement officer responds to an alarm signal and, after investigation finds no evidence that criminal activity either had occurred or was occurring, the officer will designate the alarm signal as a false alarm. A false alarm may be caused by factors such as human error or equipment malfunction. If an alarm dispatch is canceled by the alarm company prior to the time the responding officer reaches the alarm site, it shall not be considered a false alarm dispatch.

## ALARM USER REGISTRATION

Every burglar alarm must be registered with the Indian River County Sheriff's FARO within fifteen days after installation or take over. Registration does not apply to either fire or emergency medical alarm systems.

It is your alarm/monitoring company's responsibility to provide you with burglar alarm registration information at the time of sale or installation of your alarm system. Every alarm/monitoring company that conducts business within Indian River County must be licensed and provide their license number and your registration information to the FARO Administrator when requesting a permit for activation.

If you do not have an alarm/monitoring company, you must obtain registration information directly from the FARO.

A registration fee of \$30.00 must accompany each application form. A separate registration must be obtained for each alarm user and/or location.

If you change your mailing address or contact information, or make changes that alter the original permit information, you must submit these changes in writing to the FARO within five days of the change.

You and/or your alarm company must notify the FARO within fifteen days when there is a take-over in ownership or a new installation.

An alarm user shall have a properly licensed alarm business inspect his alarm system after two false alarm dispatches in a one year period. After a third false alarm dispatch, the alarm user must have a properly licensed alarm business modify the alarm system to be more false alarm resistant and/or provide additional user training as appropriate. The alarm user shall provide the Alarm Administrator with a corrective action report signed by the qualifying agent of the alarm company.

The Cities of Vero Beach, Sebastian, Indian River Shores and the town of Orchid currently have existing ordinances, and are exempt from the provision of this Ordinance.

## WHAT YOUR ALARM COMPANY SHOULD DO FOR YOU

In an effort to reduce false alarms, your alarm company is required, by law, to take certain proactive measures:

1. Your alarm/monitoring company must attempt to verify every alarm signal, except duress or hold-up, **BEFORE** requesting law enforcement dispatch.
2. If it is determined that an alarm signal is false, your alarm/monitoring company **MUST** immediately attempt to cancel the police dispatch. **Don't let your alarm company tell you this cannot be done.** You cannot personally cancel a police dispatch unless you initiated the call.
3. When you have a new alarm system installed in your home or business, your alarm company must provide you with a completed and signed Installation Certificate. This Certificate affirms that:
  - \* the system meets or exceeds installation standards,
  - \* all persons responsible for the operation of the system have been fully trained in its proper use, and
  - \* the alarm business has explained the requirements for registration and has completed/provided the alarm user with a copy of the registration form.
4. After July 1, 1999, alarm businesses shall not program alarm systems so that they are capable of sending one plus duress alarms. Alarm businesses may continue to report one plus duress alarms received from alarm systems programmed with this feature prior to July 1, 1999.
5. Any alarm company service technician that fails to place a system on "test" and causes a false alarm dispatch, shall be assessed a \$100.00 fine.