

a·larm¹ S2

/ə'la:m \$ ə'la:rm/

noun

1 [countable] a piece of equipment that makes a loud noise to warn you of danger:

I forgot to set the burglar alarm.

Car alarms are always going off in the street.

a sophisticated alarm system

2 [uncountable] **FRIGHTENED** a feeling of fear or worry because something bad or dangerous might happen:

alarm at

There is growing alarm at the increase in crime.

in alarm

She looked up in alarm.

*Scientists have said **there is no cause for alarm.***

3 [countable] an alarm clock:

*I've **set the alarm** for 7 o'clock.*

*I was still asleep when the **alarm went off.***

4 raise/sound the alarm **WARN** (especially BrE)

to warn people that something bad is happening:

Neighbours raised the alarm when they smelled smoke.

5 alarm bells ring

if alarm bells ring, you feel worried that something bad may be happening:

Alarm bells started to ring when he failed to return home.

→ [FALSE ALARM](#)

COLLOCATIONSSense 1

ADJECTIVES/NOUN + alarm

a burglar alarm *Neighbours heard the burglar alarm and called the police.*

an intruder/ a security alarm *The house has a system of security alarms.*

a fire/ smoke alarm *A fire alarm went off and the building had to be evacuated.*

a car alarm (= for when someone tries to steal a car) *I was woken by a car alarm in the middle of the night.*

a baby alarm (= for when a baby wakes up and cries) *Is the baby alarm switched on?*

a personal alarm (= that you carry with you in case you are attacked) *If you are nervous, invest in a personal alarm.*

alarm + NOUN

an alarm button *He hit the alarm button under the desk.*

an alarm system *an electronic burglar alarm system*

verbs

set off/ trigger/ activate the alarm (= make it start ringing) *A window blew open, setting off the alarm.*

set the alarm (= make it ready to operate) *Did you set the burglar alarm?*

an alarm goes off (also an alarm sounds (formal)) *The thieves fled when an alarm went off.*

switch/ turn off the alarm *I entered the shop and switched off the alarm.*

Word origin

Date: 1500–1600

Language: French

Origin: *alarme*, from Old Italian *all' arme* 'to the weapon'

alarm²

verb

[transitive]

WORRIED to make someone feel worried or frightened:

I don't want to alarm you, but I can't find the key.

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

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