



Office of the Treasurer & Tax Collector

City and County of San Francisco

Street Address: 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, City Hall, Room 140, San Francisco, CA 94102

Telephone: (415) 554-5204

Fax: (415) 554-5316

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

LICENSE NUMBER _____

DATE ISSUED _____

ALARM LICENSE APPLICATION (INCLUDES RENEWAL)

I. RESIDENCE ALARM SUBSCRIBER'S NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)

DAY PHONE #: _____ NIGHT PHONE # _____ FAX: _____

ADDRESS OF ALARM SITE (include apt., bldg. or unit number) (Street, City, State, Zip)

C/O _____ DAY PHONE #: _____ FAX: _____

MAILING ADDRESS (If different from site address)

II. BUSINESS ALARM SUBSCRIBER'S NAME FEDERAL ID # _____

DAY PHONE #: _____ NIGHT PHONE # _____ FAX: _____

ADDRESS OF ALARM SITE (include apt., bldg., or unit number) (Street, City, State, Zip)

C/O _____ DAY PHONE #: _____ FAX: _____

MAILING ADDRESS (If different from site address)

III. ALARM INFORMATION

ALARM INSTALLATION COMPANY NAME	PHONE	FAX
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PROTECT AMERICA, INC	800-951-5111	512-246-7218
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ALARM MONITORING COMPANY NAME	PHONE	FAX
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CRITICOM MONITORING SERVICES	800-482-9800	
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ALARM START DATE _____

IV. EMERGENCY INFORMATION (Names and phone numbers of two persons for emergency contact)

CONTACT PERSON'S NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)	DAY PHONE #	NIGHT PHONE #
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CONTACT PERSON'S NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)	DAY PHONE #	NIGHT PHONE #
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I have carefully read the completed application and declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

PLEASE SEND TO YOUR ALARM COMPANY THE COMPLETED APPLICATION WITH CHECK MADE OUT TO YOUR ALARM INSTALLATION OR MONITORING COMPANY. HOWEVER, IF YOUR ALARM IS ALREADY INSTALLED AND IS NOT MONITORED BY A MONITORING COMPANY, PLEASE SEND THE COMPLETED APPLICATION WITH CHECK MADE OUT TO SF TAX COLLECTOR TO:

AMOUNT PAID \$ _____

NON-REFUNDABLE LICENSE FEE:

RESIDENTIAL (\$45)

COMMERCIAL (\$70)

Office of the Treasurer & Tax Collector

City and County of San Francisco

License Unit

P.O. Box 7427, San Francisco, CA 94120-7427

(SEE ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON THE BACK OF THIS APPLICATION)

IMPORTANT ALARM LICENSE INFORMATION

I. License Required; Application; Fee; Transferability.

- (a) No alarm user shall operate or cause to be operated an alarm system at its alarm site without a valid alarm license. A separate alarm license is required for each alarm site.
- (b) The initial alarm license fee must be paid to the alarm installation company at the time the alarm system is installed or to the alarm monitoring company at the time the alarm user contracts with the company for monitoring services. If the alarm user does not use an alarm installation or monitoring company, the fee must be submitted to the Tax Collector within five (5) days after the alarm system installation or alarm system takeover.
- (c) An alarm license cannot be transferred to another person or alarm site. An alarm user shall inform the Tax Collector of any change that alters any of the information listed on the alarm license application within five (5) business days of such change.

II. Alarm License Duration And Renewal

- (a) An alarm license shall expire at 12:01 a.m. on January 1 of each year, and must be renewed every year.
- (b) Failure to renew the license will be classified as use of a non-licensed alarm system and citations and penalties shall be assessed without waiver.

III. Penalties

- (a) No penalty shall be assessed for the first false alarm from an alarm system during the calendar year. Thereafter, the alarm user shall pay a penalty for each subsequent false alarm from the same alarm system during the calendar year, based upon the following schedule:

NUMBER OF FALSE ALARMS

1
2
3
4
5 or more

PENALTIES

No penalty
\$100
\$150 per alarm
\$200 per alarm
\$250 per alarm

- (b) Any person operating a non-licensed alarm system will be subject to a penalty of \$100, as well as a penalty of \$250 for each false alarm, including the first false alarm during the calendar year. *****ALARM USER

SIGNATURE

DATE

CUSTOMER FALSE ALARM PREVENTION CHECKLIST

Yes	No	
<u>X</u>	___	1. I have been made aware of the applicable alarm ordinance and I will comply with its requirements.
<u>X</u>	___	2. I understand it is my responsibility to prevent false alarms, and I understand that it is critical and my responsibility to assure that all users of the system (such as residents, employees, guests, cleaning people, and repair people) are trained on the proper use of the system.
___	___	3. I understand that the monitoring company may agree with the alarm user not to make an alarm dispatch request of the Department of Emergency Communications in response to a burglar alarm signal, excluding panic, duress and hold up signals, during the first seven (7) days following an alarm system installation.
___	___	4. I have been trained in the proper operation of the system and have been given an operating sheet summarizing the proper use of the system, as well as the security system operating manual.
___	___	5. I know how to turn off motion detectors while leaving other sensors on. (Residential only)
___	___	6. I know how to test the system, including the communication link with the monitoring center.
___	___	7. I understand that my entry time is ___ and my exit time is ___.
<u>X</u>	___	8. I have the alarm company phone number to request repair service or to ask questions about the alarm system.
___	___	9. I know how to cancel an accidental alarm activation and have the system cancellation code or code word.
<u>X</u>	___	10. I understand that indoor pets can cause false alarms, and I will contact my alarm company to adjust the system if I acquire any additional indoor pets.
___	___	11. I understand that the main control panel and transformer are located in _____.
___	___	12. I have received an alarm sheet, which describes how the alarm company will communicate with me in the event of various alarm signals.
<u>X</u>	___	13. I understand the importance of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping my emergency contact information updated and I know how to do this; • Immediately advising the alarm company if my phone number changes (including area code changes); and • Immediately advising the alarm company of any other changes to my telephone service such as call waiting or a fax line.
<u>X</u>	___	14. I will advise the alarm company if I do any remodeling (such as painting, moving walls, doors or windows).
<u>X</u>	___	15. I understand that certain building defects (such as loose fitting doors or windows, rodents, inadequate power, and roof leaks) can cause false alarms. I will correct these defects as I become aware of them.
<u>X</u>	___	16. The alarm company has given me written false alarm prevention techniques to help me prevent false alarms.

Comments:

QUESTIONS 3-7, 11 & 12 - the operating sheet/manual will be provided with the system. The customer will receive training when they are talked through the installation. For question # 9, we will be providing information explaining how to cancel an accidental alarm and codes will be set up during installation.

ALARM COMPANY

CUSTOMER

DATE

PROTECT AMERICA, INC.

Print Name(s)

By: _____

Signature(s)

License Fees

Residential: \$45 per year
Commercial: \$70 per year

Penalties

No penalty shall be assessed for the first false alarm from a licensed alarm system during the calendar year. Thereafter, the alarm user shall pay a penalty for each subsequent false alarm from the same alarm system during the calendar year.

<u>Number of False Alarms</u>	<u>Penalty</u>
1	No penalty
2	\$100 per alarm
3	\$150 per alarm
4	\$200 per alarm
5 or more	\$250 per alarm

Operating a non-licensed alarm system (whether revoked, suspended or never licensed) is subject to a penalty of \$100, as well as a penalty of \$250 for each false alarm. If the user registers with the Office of the Treasurer & Tax Collector within ten (10) days of the violation, the first \$100 may be waived.

If a license fee or false alarm penalty is not paid within thirty (30) days, the Office of the Treasurer & Tax Collector shall add 50% to the amount of the fee or penalty, as a penalty for non-payment. Additional costs and interest charges will accrue thereafter.

Appeals

You may appeal the assessment of a penalty or license revocation by calling (415) 558-3822 to explain the basis for the contention that the City improperly assessed a fee or revoked a license. **For more information, please visit the DEM website at:**

www.sfdem.org/

- City Programs
- Police Emergency Alarm Ordinance
- Can I appeal a fine?

How to Prevent False Alarms

- Lock all protected doors and windows.
- Keep pets, balloons, curtains, fans, heaters, plants, decorations, etc. away from motion sensor areas.
- Know how to cancel the alarm if the system activates.
- Educate alarm users (family, babysitters, caretakers, maids, realtors, etc.) on how to operate your alarm system.
- Have your alarm company check and service your system regularly.
- Contact your alarm company if you plan on remodeling, changing phone systems, installing ceiling fans, etc.

What Your Alarm Company Should Do for You

- Your alarm monitoring company must attempt to verify every alarm signal — except panic, duress or hold-up — **before** requesting response from law enforcement.
- If it is determined that an alarm signal is false, your alarm monitoring company **MUST** immediately attempt to cancel the police dispatch. **Do not let your alarm company tell you that this cannot be done.** You cannot personally cancel a police dispatch unless you initiated the call to your alarm monitoring company first.



Police Emergency Alarm Ordinance

City and County of San Francisco
Department of Emergency Management
Police Emergency Alarm Ordinance Program

(415) 558-3822

www.sfgov.org/dem

*For additional information concerning the
Alarm Ordinance, please contact
the Department of Emergency Management
(415) 558-3822*

Background

Alarms were designed to protect lives and property. When properly installed, maintained and operated, alarms can be a real asset. The San Francisco Police Department responded to over 55,000 alarm-related calls in 2002. However, over 90% of these alarm-related calls were false. When alarms are not properly installed, maintained and operated, they become a liability. Each year false alarms cost taxpayers millions of dollars and subject the public and police to needless danger when the police are called to respond to false alarms. False alarms in our community continue to increase every year with new alarm systems being installed by numerous companies doing business in San Francisco and residential users. In order to reduce the dangers and annoyances associated with false alarms, and to encourage alarm users to properly use and maintain their alarm systems in good working order, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed the ***Police Emergency Alarm Ordinance***. For the full text of the Ordinance, please see the San Francisco Police Code, Article 37.

The Police Emergency Alarm Ordinance requires all alarm users to obtain a license from the City and County to lawfully operate an alarm within San Francisco, and provides for penalties if there is a false alarm. Law Enforcement would prefer that every alarm user experience zero false alarms. The alarm ordinance provides for one “free” false alarm for licensed users in a calendar year. On the second false alarm for a licensed user in a calendar year, the alarm user will be fined \$100. The penalties escalate upon each additional false alarm.

The purpose of this brochure is to highlight and understand the major points of the Police Emergency Alarm Ordinance.

What Is a False Alarm?

The Police Emergency Alarm Ordinance defines a false alarm as “an alarm dispatch request to a law enforcement agency, when the responding law enforcement officer finds no evidence of a criminal offense or attempted criminal offense after having completed a timely investigation of the alarm site” [*San Francisco Police Code Section 3702(o)*]. This simply means that if a law enforcement officer responds to an alarm signal and after investigating finds no evidence that criminal activity either had occurred or was occurring, the signal will be designated as a false alarm dispatch. A false alarm may be caused by factors such as human error, storm activity, or equipment malfunction.

How the Ordinance Works

The ordinance became effective March 31, 2003. ***No alarm user shall operate or cause to be operated, an alarm system at its alarm site without a valid alarm license.*** Alarm users may be subject to a penalty of \$100 for failure to obtain a license, as well as a penalty of \$250 for each false alarm when the alarm is not licensed in addition to the penalties for false alarms. The Office of the Treasurer & Tax Collector may waive the first \$100 penalty for failure to license the alarm if the user registers the alarm within ten (10) days of the violation.

Alarm User Registration

• New Alarm Systems or Self-Monitored Systems

Every emergency alarm system must be licensed with the Office of the Treasurer & Tax Collector **before** the system is placed into service. It is your alarm installation or monitoring company’s responsibility to collect the alarm license application and fee, and provide you with information about the Police Emergency Alarm Ordinance at the time of sale or installation of your alarm system.

If you do not use an alarm installation or monitoring company, it is your responsibility to file an alarm license application and pay the fee directly to the Office of the Treasurer & Tax Collector within five (5) days after the alarm system installation or alarm system takeover.

• Alarm Systems in Place as of March 31, 2003

The ordinance requires your alarm monitoring or installation company to bill you for the license.

Annual License Renewal

An alarm license shall expire at 12:01 a.m. on January 1 of each year, and must be renewed every year by submitting an updated application and a license renewal fee to the Office of the Treasurer & Tax Collector, directly or through an alarm company. Failure to renew will be classified as use of a non-licensed alarm system and citation and penalties shall be assessed without waiver.

If you change your mailing address, contact information, or make any changes that alter the original license information, you must immediately notify the Office of the Treasurer & Tax Collector of these changes in writing at:

Office of the Treasurer & Tax Collector
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
City Hall, Room 140
San Francisco, CA 94102-4639

You may obtain a license application or renewal form from the Office of the Treasurer & Tax Collector; via the Internet at www.sfgov.org/tax; or by calling (415) 554-5204.

Protect America, Inc. False Alarm Prevention Program

What is a false alarm?

A false alarm is defined as any signal that elicits a response by police, fire or emergency medical services for which there is no evidence of criminal activity, fire, or medical need to justify an emergency response. This simply means that if emergency personnel respond to an alarm activation and, after investigation, find no evidence that criminal, fire, or medical activity either had occurred or was occurring, the emergency response personnel will designate the alarm signal as a false alarm.

With an estimated 25% yearly increase in alarm systems nationwide, emergency responders are becoming overwhelmed with false alarms. This is resulting in stricter ordinances, severe fines and limited or no response policies.

It is your responsibility to prevent false alarms. Help us reduce false alarms through the proper use and maintenance of your alarm system.

False Alarms

- Divert emergency resources away from true emergencies.
- Are a nuisance to you and your neighbors.
- Make your security system less reliable.
- Cost you and your community money.

Major causes of false alarms are:

- User error.
- Unlocked or loose doors or windows.
- Kids, pets, neighbors, visitors, repairmen, employees and cleaning crews.
- Equipment malfunction or weak system batteries.

Before you activate your alarm system:

Anyone who uses the security system needs to be fully educated on its proper operation. This may include children, neighbors, domestics, cleaning crews, caretakers, realtors, employees, and temporary staff.

- Make sure you securely close and lock all protected doors and windows.
- If you are leaving your home or business make sure the door you leave by is closed tight.
- Keep pets, balloons, fans, heaters, plants, etc. away from motion sensor areas.
- Know and rehearse the process to cancel an accidental alarm. Anyone with your key should know this process.
- Know how much time you have after you arm your system to leave and to disarm your system when you enter.
- Set your system so it has an arming delay of at least 60 seconds on all doors.
- Read and follow the instructions in your operator's manual.

What to do if you set off your alarm by accident:

- First, don't panic. Carefully enter your disarm code to reset you system.
- **Call the central monitoring station, 877-274-0604, immediately.**
- Tell them you had an accidental alarm activation and cancel the alarm dispatch. **Do not leave your home or business until you have talked with your monitoring station.**
- Do not call 911 to cancel an alarm activation. You must call the monitoring station.
- You can arrange to have the monitoring station call you or another designated person BEFORE the police, fire, or medical personnel are called whenever your alarm is activated. Then if you are aware of a problem with the system you can cancel the alarm dispatch.

Alarm User _____
Signature Date

False Alarm prevention

With people:

- Train your emergency contacts with keys on complete system operation.
- Instruct domestics or repair persons on how to fully operate your system.
- Use deadbolt locks.
- Expand your protection with an alert neighborhood watch.

Avoid conditions that can trigger your alarm

- Tighten loose fitting doors or windows. Loose fitting doors or windows can affect any attached sensors.
- Keep doors and windows locked when the alarm is "ON" to reduce the chance that friends, neighbors or customers can enter and activate the alarm.
- If you have pets purchase an alarm system that is tolerant of pets (pet immune). You may not want to purchase motion detectors if your pets have free run of the house when the alarm is on. Barking dogs can activate glass break detectors under certain conditions.
- Mylar balloons.
- Drafts that move plants and curtains.

At your business watch for these pitfalls that may activate your alarm:

- Swinging doors or windows.
- Banners or signs.
- Mylar balloons.
- Plants or curtains caught in drafts.
- Seasonal decorations.
- Stacked items such as boxes that may fall setting off motion detectors.
- Unsupervised guests.
- Untrained, unaware, or careless employees.
- Alarm equipment, such as motion sensors or overhead door magnets being hit by forklifts.

Contact Protect America, Inc @ 800-951-5111:

- To test your system monthly.
- If you plan home improvement or renovation projects, such as the configuration of a room, adding a wall, rearranging cubicles, installing skylights, ceiling fans, changing phone systems or service such as call waiting, VoIP, use of DSL, cable modem or fax line, etc.
- If you plan to fumigate.
- If you plan to change your alarm system batteries causing an interruption in you system's power supply.
- If you get a pet.
- If you hire a private contractor (domestic help, cleaning crew, Realtor, etc.).
- If you change your phone numbers.
- To keep your emergency contact information updated.
- To inform us of any temporary contact information needed during any extended period of absence from your home or business due to work or vacations.
- To provide two different phone numbers in which we can contact you before we dispatch the police when your alarm is activated. This is known as Enhanced Call Verification. This procedure helps prevent false alarms.

You can make a difference and be part of the solution!

Alarm User _____

Signature

Date