



ALARM DETAIL & ADMINISTRATION UNIT

Regulation of Alarm Systems as authorized by the Texas Local Government Code 233.092 and Administered by the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office, effective December 13, 2011, mandates any Residence or Business operating a monitored Security Alarm System, located within Unincorporated Fort Bend County, shall register and renew the Security Alarm System each year.

Facts | Residential & Commercial Burglar Alarm Permits

- Every residence and business with an alarm intended to summon police, regardless if the alarm system is monitored or not, are required to have a permit.
- It is a violation of Fort Bend County Regulations to operate a security alarm system without a valid permit.
- The initial cost to register and obtain an Alarm Permit for a Home or Business Security Alarm System is \$35 and it is valid for (1) year.
- To continue lawfully operating an alarm system an annual \$10 renewal fee is required.
- Payment must be in our office or paid online no later than the expiration date or it result in cancellation and a \$35 New Permit Fee shall be required for reinstatement of the Alarm Permit.
- Use of an alarm system without a valid alarm permit shall be subject to a fee of no less than \$75 per each false alarm. Criminal prosecution and imposition of fines, response fees, and other costs may be determined by a court of proper jurisdiction.
- Police will respond to all human-activated alarms, such as panic alarms and hold-up alarms.
- Locations without a valid permit may receive a citation.
- It is the alarm permit holder's responsibility to contact the alarm company and provide them with the permit number.
- Your alarm company must provide police 911 operators with your permit number.
- Permit holders are allowed five (5) free false alarms within a (1) year period before a fine will be imposed. The (1) year period begins on the 1st day of the alarm permit month and ends on the expiration date of the alarm permit, which is the last day of the month.

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I register and obtain a security alarm permit?

- Online: [Register, Annual Renewal & Update User Account](#)
 - By Mail: [Alarm Permit Application](#)
 - Download, print and sign the completed application form.
 - Enclose a check or money order : \$35 New Permit Fee or \$10 Renewal Fee
- Mail to: **Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office**
Attn: Alarm Detail
1410 Richmond Parkway
Richmond, TX 77469

Now that I have an alarm permit, what do I need to do?

Once you have your alarm permit, be sure to contact your alarm company and provide them with your permit number and expiration date.

Who is required to have an alarm permit?

Any Residence or Business within Unincorporated Fort Bend County (locations outside the city limits), having an active burglar alarm system that is intended to summon Law Enforcement is required to obtain an alarm permit.

This includes, but is not limited to: apartments, houses, condos, businesses, stores, churches, warehouses, storage buildings, and offices.

Government buildings are exempt from paying the permit fee; however, they must still register the alarm system.

How can I determine if my alarm site is within Unincorporated Fort Bend County or the City Limits?

Jurisdiction is according to the responding Law Enforcement Agency upon the alert of your security system. Another instance would be if you dialed 911 or perhaps need to file a Police Report. If you are still uncertain on whose jurisdiction you reside in, you can verify such via this [GIS Map](#).

Am I required to get an alarm permit if an alarm company does not monitor my alarm?

Yes. Even if there is no valid permit or monitoring for the alarm site, Law Enforcement still responds to certain types of alarms such as panic and hold-up alarms, or those called in by a neighbor or third party.

Operating an alarm system without a valid permit is in violation of the Fort Bend County Alarm Regulations and shall be subject to a fee of no less than \$75 per each false alarm. Criminal prosecution and imposition of fines, response fees, and other costs may be determined by a court of proper jurisdiction.

What if I have an alarm but do not have a permit?

The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office will not deny a call for service; however, use of a non-permitted alarm system shall be subject to issuance of a citation and additional penalties maybe assessed.

Is one alarm permit sufficient for an office building with several suites?

No. A separate permit is required for each alarm site and each alarm unit. Offices with one address that occupy more than one suite are required to have a permit for each suite.

Am I still required to obtain an alarm permit if I live in an apartment and the apartment management already has an alarm permit?

Yes. Each residential apartment with an alarm system is responsible for obtaining their own permit. The apartment management is responsible for all non-residential areas of the apartment complex, such as offices, storage facilities, clubhouses, weight rooms, etc.

Are alarm permits transferable?

No. Permits are not transferrable to another address or another person / business. Fees are non-refundable.

What deems as a false alarm?

According to the Fort Bend County Regulations: An alarm signal received by the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office that is later determined not to involve a criminal offense, attempted criminal offense, or other emergency of the kind for which the alarm system was designated to give notice, or as may be further defined by Chapter 237 of the Texas Local Government Code, as amended.

Will I receive a charge for an alarm activation that is not false?

No. You will never receive a charge for an alarm activation that is the result of a criminal offense, attempted criminal offense, fire, or other emergency.

What will happen if my permit expires?

An expired permit will become invalid. To continue lawfully operating a security alarm system, a \$35 New Permit Fee shall be required for issuance of an alarm permit.

Use of a non-permitted alarm system shall be subject to issuance of a citation and additional penalties maybe assessed.

What happens if I remit the \$10 Renewal Fee after the expiration date?

The late remittance of the \$10 renewal fee will cause the permit to lapse and expire. You will receive a denial notice requesting you to remit a \$35 New Permit Fee.

How will I know when it is time to renew my alarm permit?

As a courtesy, a Renewal Notice (blue paper) will be mailed (1) month prior to the expiration month.

Failure to receive notice of renewal does not relieve the permit holder of the responsibility of renewing the permit on time.

Why do I need an Alarm Permit?

Having an alarm permit serves (2) purposes:

- It provides Law Enforcement with direct contact information and renewals keep the contact information updated and current. Should a criminal offense occur, the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office can contact you directly.
- Law Enforcement personnel respond to thousands of false alarm calls yearly. These unnecessary responses result in an enormous burden in manpower and expense; which in turn reduces the time available to respond to real emergencies.

How can I prevent False Alarms?

All too often, they are the results of faulty and unmaintained equipment or avoidable environmental factors such as human error, pets, and guests in a home, etc. You should review our False Alarm Prevention Tips located on our homepage.

What is Enhanced Call Verification (ECV)?

Enhanced Call Verification is a simple and effective way that you can prevent Law Enforcement from responding to a false burglar alarm. It requires your alarm company to attempt to verify every burglar alarm activation by making a minimum of (2) phone calls to (2) different numbers prior to requesting Law Enforcement response.

It also has the potential to deliver significant and immediate reductions to these unnecessary responses that result in an enormous burden in manpower and expense; which in turn reduces the time available for Law Enforcement to respond to real emergencies.

The Enhanced Call Verification procedure is applicable only on burglar alarm signals. All fire, medical, panic, hold-up or duress and robbery signals would follow the dispatch procedures required by the Fort Bend County Regulations and in accordance with the alarm company's standard operating procedures.

How can ECV benefit you?

ECV provides alarm users with a simple way to help avoid false alarms and the imposed fines for reasons such as:

- After-hour cleaning crews, scheduled maintenance work, or employees who forget their password.
- Forgetting to close a window or door before activating your alarm system, leaving pets in areas protected by motion detectors, or by authorized users returning home and not remembering their password.

How do I request Enhanced Call Verification (ECV)?

It is important that alarm owners communicate with their alarm companies to reduce this type of concern. If the alarm company does not do as requested and results in an imposed fine, you would have a strong argument for requesting reimbursement for that fine from your alarm company.

Most alarm companies already offer this service at no cost to the alarm user, and many have made it their standard operating procedure for burglary alarms.

Why do I have to pay an Alarm Registration Fee in addition to the taxes I already pay?

Fort Bend County taxpayers are spending a substantial amount of money per year for Law Enforcement to respond to false alarms. Individuals without an alarm system are subsidizing those who do have alarm systems. In addition, officers are often helping other citizens and have to leave those calls to respond to what essentially amounts to a false call for service. When a private alarm company sells an alarm system for profit, they are selling the fact that Law Enforcement will respond.

For further details regarding the Alarm Detail & Administration Unit, please refer to the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office | Alarm Detail web page where you will find all applicable documents as well as answers to any questions you may have.

Website: <https://crywolf.fortbendcountytexas.gov>

Hours of Operation:

Monday – Friday (8:00 am – 4:00 pm)
Excluding Weekends & Holidays

Phone # | 281.341.4610

Email | SOAlarmDetail@fortbendcountytexas.gov