



# Saint John Police Force Policy Document Commercial Alarm Policy

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Administrative Contact Information:

Troy McGraw  
Manager, Policy and Risk Management  
[troy.mcgraw.police@saintjohn.ca](mailto:troy.mcgraw.police@saintjohn.ca)

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## A. POLICY STATEMENT

The Saint John Police Force will maintain the direction stated in this policy, for responding to alarms initiated from a non-residential, commercial premise.

## B. PURPOSE

1. Burglar alarms, by their very nature, compel the police to provide an emergency response. When the alarm turns out to be false, the safety of the police and the public has unnecessarily been placed at risk. False alarms also compromise the Saint John Police Force's (SJPF) ability to respond to true emergencies.
2. In response to the number of false alarms the SJPF attends, this policy will serve to reduce and address the number of repeat occurrences. This policy does not apply to residential alarms.

## C. DEFINITIONS

1. **Alarm Companies:** Means any person or persons who engage in the business of monitoring alarm systems (including live video surveillance) and reports to the SJPF when an alarm system has been activated.
2. **Alarm System:** Means any device which, when activated transmits a signal which can be audible, visual, or by other means, to alert a person(s) to the activation.
3. **Burglar Alarm:** Means an alarm system installed in a premise which, when activated, signals an alert of criminal activity or imminent threat to personal safety. It includes but is not limited to alarm distinctions described as burglar, motion, door, window, glass break, etcetera.
4. **Commercial Alarm:** Means an event created in response to the activation of an alarm system installed in a non-residential premise.
5. **Commercial Alarm Premise:** A non-residential premise with an address.
6. **False Alarm:** Means an alarm system signal which causes police response to investigate criminal activity or imminent threat to personal safety whereupon police officers at the scene confirm no such situation has taken place or means the activation of an alarm system, where in the opinion of the Chief of Police or designate, no emergency or evidence of criminal activity exists.
7. **Financial Institution:** Means a bank, a trust, loan businesses, credit union or any entity dealing in large sums of cash or securities.
8. **Hold-Up and Panic Alarm:** Means an event created in response to the activation of a hold-up and panic alarm signal installed in a financial institution or commercial premise which, when activated signals an alert of a robbery in progress.
9. **Post Suspension Alarm:** Means a request received from a commercial premise for a police response to a commercial alarm that has been suspended from receiving police response.
10. **Residential Alarm:** Means an event created in response to the activation of an alarm system installed in a residential premise, including multi-unit residential buildings.
11. **Valid Alarm:** Means an alarm system signal, confirmed by police officers at the scene, that was activated for its intended purpose. The intended purpose of an alarm system is to alert of criminal activity or imminent threat to personal safety.

## D. POLICY OVERVIEW

### 1. Police Response

The SJPF will respond to requests from an alarm company to attend and investigate commercial alarms at a commercial premise under the following conditions:

- a) the alarm company operator has contacted the key holder and confirmed they are attending; and
- b) requests received from an alarm company to attend an address that is not under police response suspension.

If an alarm company requests response to a suspended address with a commercial alarm system (i.e. post suspension alarm), the SJPF may accept the call for service. Any such alarm found to be false will be invoiced \$100.00 per call.

Note: This policy only applies to commercial alarms, in which Financial Institutions, schools and hospitals are exempt.

### 2. Public Safety and Communications Centre (PSCC) Responsibilities

**PSCC Call-Taker** is responsible for the following:

- a) receiving calls from alarm companies reporting a commercial alarm activation;
- b) generating a CAD call;
- c) if no key holder is attending, advise the alarm company that police will not be attending, unless it is a hold-up or panic alarm.
  - i) PSCC operators are not responsible for contacting the key holders if the alarm company has not been able to reach them;
- d) if police are responding, review the current list of suspended addresses, to determine the status of police response to commercial alarm activations. In the case of:
  - ii) A post suspension alarm, advise caller that due to the alarm system suspension, police will not be responding. The call-ending disposition must be entered as "No Response - Post Suspension Alarm";
  - iii) alarm calls made to non-suspended addresses, are to be routed to the PSCC dispatcher.

**PSCC Dispatcher** is responsible for the following:

- a) dispatching the CAD call to police units;
- b) tracking any call updates, specifically at scene times; and
- c) assigning call-ending dispositions appropriately. In the case of:
  - i) false alarm (as indicated by the responding officer), the PSCC Dispatcher will enter the call-ending disposition as "No Report - False Alarm".

### **PSCC Specialist Responsibilities**

The PSCC Specialist is responsible for generating a monthly Cognos report for SJPF alarm response management purposes. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) running a monthly Cognos report to identify CAD calls with the following call-ending dispositions:
  - i) No Report - False Alarm;
  - ii) No Response- Post Suspension Alarm.
- b) emailing the Cognos report to the PSCC Administrative Assistant monthly

### **PSCC Administrative Assistant Responsibilities**

The PSCC Administrative Assistant responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) reviewing the monthly Cognos report provided by the PSCC Specialist, to identify companies that have received two false alarm calls within one calendar year, and companies that have received four false alarm calls within one calendar year;
- b) drafting a Special Caution Notice once a commercial alarm system has incurred two false alarm events within a calendar year. The Special Caution Notice will be issued to the following:
  - i) the registered commercial alarm premise's address.
- c) drafting an Alarm Suspension Notice once a commercial alarm system has incurred four false alarm events within one calendar year. The Alarm Suspension Notice will be issued to the following:
  - i) the registered commercial alarm premise's address; and,
- d) drafting a Reinstatement Advisory Notice to the registered address of the alarm system upon the end of the suspension period.
- e) submitting all notices to the Inspector of Support Services along with supporting documentation, for approval before issuing notices to the registered address of alarm system;
- f) notifying the SJPF Senior Financial Analyst should a commercial alarm premise request response to a suspended alarm system (i.e. Post Suspension Alarm), and such alarm event is found to be false.

## **3. Inspector of Support Services**

The Inspector of Support Services responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) approving the Special Caution, Alarm Suspension, and the Reinstatement Advisory notices for issuance;
- b) processing appeal requests and decision maker; and
- c) advising the Manager of PSCC Operations and Information Systems or designate, when a commercial alarm premise has incurred three past due post suspension alarm invoices resulting in the suspension police response to an alarm, or when a suspended address becomes reinstated.

#### 4. SJPF Senior Financial Analyst Responsibilities

The SJPF Senior Financial Analyst responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) as indicated by the PSCC Administrative Assistant, invoicing a fee of \$100.00 per call should a commercial alarm request a post suspension alarm and such alarm event is found to be false, and notifying the Inspector of Support Services should a commercial alarm premise incur three past due post suspension alarm invoices.

#### 5. Manager of PSCC Operations and Information Systems

The Manager of PSCC Operations and Information Systems or designate is responsible for the following:

- a) Communicating to PSCC the addresses where police response to an alarm is actively suspended, as indicated by the Inspector of Support Services.

#### 6. Commercial Alarm Premise Responsibilities:

Commercial Alarm Premise is responsible for, but not limited to, the following:

- a) ensuring alarm users are informed of this Policy and any updates therein, and its contents (i.e. suspension policies, alarm disposition appeal procedure, suspension appeal procedure);
- b) providing written and oral instructions to alarm system users in the proper use and operation of the alarm system; and complying with the described requirements contained within this Policy.

#### 7. Alarm System User Responsibilities

Alarm system users are responsible for, but not limited to, the following:

- a) maintaining the premise and alarm system in a manner that will minimize or eliminate false alarms;
- b) providing up to date contact names, telephone numbers and mailing address to the SJPF and the commercial alarm premise;
- c) responding to or having a key holder who has access to the alarm system location attend when requested by the SJPF to assist with the deactivation of the alarm system, providing access and/or providing alternate security;
- d) not activating the alarm system for any reason other than the purpose of which the alarm system was intended; and
- e) addressing alarm system issues (i.e. service, suspension of service, submission of disposition appeal request or suspension appeal request) with the commercial alarm premise.

## E. SPECIAL CAUTION

### 1. Correspondence - Special Caution Notice

The PSCC Administrative Assistant will provide a Special Caution Notice to commercial alarm premise once an alarm system has incurred two false alarm events within a calendar year.

There are two types of Special Caution Notices: one for three or less false alarms and another for four or more false alarms.

### 2. Commercial Alarm - Caution

The commercial alarm premise is responsible for informing the appropriate alarm system user that the alarm system has incurred two false alarm events. It is recommended that steps be taken to prevent police response to additional false alarm events (this includes retraining in the operation of the alarm system and/or service to the installed alarm system).

## F. SUSPENSION OF POLICE RESPONSE

### 1. Correspondence - Suspension Notice

Upon a commercial alarm premise's address incurring four false alarm events within a calendar year, and after having received a special caution notice, the PSCC Administrative Assistant will issue a suspension notice. The suspension will become effective fourteen days after issuing the Alarm Suspension Notice. Should a commercial alarm premise request a Post Suspension Alarm response, the SJPF may accept the call for service. Any such alarm event found to be false will be invoiced \$100.00 per call. Should an alarm user incur three past due post suspension alarm invoices, police response to a commercial alarm will be discontinued.

### 2. Commercial alarm premise - Suspension

The commercial alarm premise is responsible for informing the appropriate alarm system user of the impending suspension status, for explaining the SJPF suspension appeal procedures and establishing alternate response arrangements.

### 3. Suspension Term

The suspension of service to an alarm system will remain in effect for one calendar year from the suspension effective date. After one calendar year of suspension, the Inspector of Support Services will review the address history to assess whether the alarm system will be reinstated. Each suspended address will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Factors that the Inspector of Support Services will consider, but not limited to, are as follows:

- a. the number of post suspension alarm requests, that were determined to be false alarms; and
- b. additional information submitted by the commercial alarm premise with respect to the steps taken to resolve false alarm causes.

## G. REINSTATEMENT OF POLICE RESPONSE

### 1. Correspondence - Reinstatement Advisory Notice

The PSCC Administrative Assistant will issue a Reinstatement Advisory Notice to the commercial alarm premise and registered address of the alarm system upon the conclusion of the suspension period, as directed by the Inspector of Support Services. See section E.3 for reinstatement guidance. Police response will resume 14 days after the reinstatement notice is issued.

### 2. The commercial alarm premise - Deferred Reinstatement

Alarm systems that have been deferred for reinstatement will be identified and remain under suspension of service. Identified addresses will be reviewed annually. If a reinstatement notice is not issued by the SJPF, this means that the address has been deferred for reinstatement. It is the responsibility of the commercial alarm premise to take the appropriate steps to notify all affected alarm companies or clients of any deferred reinstatement.

## H. APPEAL PROCESS

### 1. Appeals

The commercial alarm premise may appeal an alarm disposition or an alarm suspension of police response (invoked suspension of police response to alarm system signals). The administration of appeals (disposition or suspension) must be managed by the commercial alarm premise. The Inspector of Support Services will only accept documentation submitted by the commercial alarm premise.

### 2. Alarm Disposition Appeal

The commercial alarm premise is responsible to submit a False Alarm Appeal Request form and any supporting documentation (i.e. work order, invoice, police occurrence number, and any information describing the steps taken to resolve the false alarm issues) on behalf of the alarm system user, should information be obtained that suggests a false alarm was actually valid. This appeal must be submitted within 90 days from the notice issuance date.



### 3. Alarm Suspension Appeal

The commercial alarm premise is responsible to submit a Suspension Appeal Request form and any supporting documentation (i.e., work order, invoice, explanation letter, etcetera, describing the steps taken to resolve the false alarm issues) should the alarm system user request such. The Suspension Appeal form must be submitted within 90 days from the notice issuance date.

#### Note:

- A minimum suspension period of thirty (30) days, from the effective date must be served during which this period must be clear of any false and/or post suspension alarm system signals;
- A request will not be accepted where a suspension appeal was successful within the previous calendar year (this constitutes a second suspension). A previous Suspension Appeal Request must not have been processed within the past calendar year.
- The suspension is effective for a full year as of the date of issuance.
- All caution Notices will be re-set as of the 1<sup>st</sup> January of each year.

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## Special Caution Notice

Date

Address

To Whom it May Concern:

Re: Caution Notice

On November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, the Saint John Police Force (SJPF) implemented a False Alarm Reduction Policy in an effort to reduce police response to false burglar alarms at commercial locations.

I am writing to inform you that **Business**, located at **Address**, has incurred **number** false alarms since January 1<sup>st</sup>. **Alarm Company** reported the alarms, which were determined to be false by the SJPF. The following occurrences were generated as a result:

- 
- 
- 

Upon an alarm system incurring four false alarms within a calendar year, a suspension notice will be issued.

Should an alarm business request a police response to a system that has been suspended, the SJPF may accept the call for service. However, any such alarm event found to be false will be invoiced \$100.00 per call. Should an alarm user incur three past due post suspension alarm invoices, police response to a commercial alarm will be discontinued.

It is recommended that steps be taken to prevent any additional false alarm events that could result in a police response suspension (this includes but is not limited to, retraining employees in the operation of the alarm system and/or service to the installed alarm system).

Should you wish to appeal, please contact [police@saintjohn.ca](mailto:police@saintjohn.ca) to obtain a SJPF False Alarm Appeal form. Supporting documentation will be required.

Sincerely,

Marie-Eve Mackenzie-Plante  
Acting Inspector of Support Services  
Saint John Police Force



**Special Caution Notice**

Date

Address

To Whom it May Concern:

Re: Caution Notice

On November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, the Saint John Police Force (SJPF) implemented a False Alarm Reduction Policy in an effort to reduce police response to false burglar alarms at commercial locations.

I am writing to inform you that **Business** located at **Address**, has incurred **number** false alarms since January 1st. **Alarm Company** reported the alarms, which were determined to be false by the SJPF. The following occurrences were generated as a result:

- 
- 
- 

Any additional false alarms received within the current calendar year will result in a suspension notice being issued.

Should an alarm business request a police response to a system that has been suspended, the SJPF may accept the call for service. However, any such alarm event found to be false will be invoiced \$100.00 per call. Should an alarm user incur three past due post suspension alarm invoices, police response to a commercial alarm will be discontinued.

It is recommended that steps be taken to prevent any additional false alarm events resulting in a police response suspension (this includes but is not limited to, retraining employees in the operation of the alarm system and/or service to the installed alarm system).

Should you wish to appeal, please contact [police@saintjohn.ca](mailto:police@saintjohn.ca) to obtain a SJPF False Alarm Appeal form. Supporting documentation will be required.

Sincerely,

Marie-Eve Mackenzie-Plante  
Acting Inspector of Support Services  
Saint John Police Force



## Suspension Notice

Date

Address

To Whom it May Concern:

Re: Suspension Notice

I am writing to inform you that **Business** located at **Address** has incurred **number** false alarms within the current calendar year. **Alarm Company** reported the following alarms, which were determined to be false by the SJPF:

- 
- 
- 

Police response to burglar alarms at this location has been suspended, effective **Date**

Should an alarm business request a police response to a system that has been suspended, the SJPF may accept the call for service. However, any such alarm event found to be false will be invoiced \$100.00 per call. Should an alarm user incur three past due post suspension alarm invoices, police response to a commercial alarm will be discontinued.

The suspension of service will remain in effect for one calendar year. The suspension will be reviewed after one calendar year for possible reinstatement. Alarm systems that have been deferred for reinstatement will be identified and remain under suspension of service. If a reinstatement notice is not issued by the SJPF, this means that the address has been deferred for reinstatement. It is the responsibility of the alarm business to take the appropriate steps to notify all affected alarm companies or clients of any deferred reinstatement.

Should you wish to appeal, please contact [police@saintjohn.ca](mailto:police@saintjohn.ca) to obtain a SJPF Suspension Appeal form. Supporting documentation will be required (i.e. work order, invoice, any information describing the steps taken to resolve the false alarm issues).

Sincerely,

Marie-Eve Mackenzie-Plante  
Acting Inspector of Support Services  
Saint John Police Force



Saint John Police Force  
Force policière de Saint John

Security designation

**Confidential**

## Reinstatement Advisory Notice

Date

Address

To Whom it May Concern:

Re: Reinstatement Advisory Notice

I am writing to inform you that police response to burglar alarms from **Business** located at **Address** service is being reinstated by the Saint John Police Force effective **Date**

Sincerely,

Marie-Eve Mackenzie-Plante  
Acting Inspector of Support Services  
Saint John Police Force