



How to Investigate your Fire Alarm

The Facts

Fire and Rescue Services attend over 365,000 false alarms from fire alarm systems each year

Dealing with false alarms takes up valuable time – time that could mean the difference between life and death for someone in the community, and that takes firefighters away from doing important training or work with partners to improve community safety.

False alarms are also a drain on public money. They can cause complacency, reducing the effectiveness of fire safety procedures in the event of a real fire, and they disrupt business – creating unwanted downtime and loss of money.

We want to work with you to prevent it happening again.

The Causes

To prevent unwanted false alarms, you should consider the following common causes of them, and do something to stop them from happening in your workplace:

- Cooking fumes - such as burnt toast
- Steam - from shower rooms of industrial processes
- Smoking materials – such as cigarettes and matches
- Aerosol sprays
- Hotwork – from cutting and welding
- Dust build up – due to poor housekeeping or by not taking preventative measures before starting dusty work such as drilling
- Incense and candles
- Humidity and temperature change
- Accidental damage to a 'Break Glass' point
- Testing or maintenance – without telling your alarm receiving centre or incorrect testing procedure
- Changes to the use, or practices within the building

Investigating Fire Alarms

When you investigate, use your senses and if at any time you find signs of a fire, retreat from the building and make sure the fire and rescue service is called on 999.

Ensure your building is being evacuated in accordance with your alarm procedure, before doing anything else.



How to Investigate

- Where possible, investigate in pairs
- Have another member of staff at the alarm panel and remain in contact (mobile phone or short range radio)
- Gather any information from staff, or the alarm panel, to indicate where your search should be
- When investigating look for smoke, listen for unusual crackling noises, is it unusually hot
- Before opening any doors, feel the door with the back of your hand, as high up the door as you can reach, for signs of heat. If it is hot do not open the door
- Remember you are looking for signs of a fire, not a fire itself
- At any time if you suspect or find a fire, get out and operate the nearest MCP to initiate an evacuation. As soon as possible, call the fire and rescue service on 999