



False Alarms – Fire and Security

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Memo To: All Staff
From: Director of Education

ACCESSIBILITY:

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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this memo is to provide stakeholders with guidelines and expectations regarding false alarms for fire and security.

REFERENCES:

- [Ontario Fire Protection and Prevention Act 1997](#)
- [Ontario Regulation 213/07 "Fire Code"](#)
- [Waterloo Regional Police Service False Alarm Policy](#)

FORMS:

- N/A.

REPORTS:

- N/A.

APPENDICES:

- N/A.

COMMENTS AND GUIDELINES:

False Alarms - Fire

1. A false alarm is defined as the activation of a fire alarm system where in the opinion of the Chief of the Fire Department or designate, no emergency or evidence of fire exists at the premises at which the alarm system is installed. This includes the activation or testing of a fire alarm without notification to the Fire Department and alarms are triggered by natural causes or conditions.
2. False fire alarms can be caused by such things as:
 - a. Faulty sprinkler heads
 - b. Accidental pulling of the 'pull station'
 - c. Burnt food
3. The Board incurs a cost when staff or contractors are required to respond to false fire alarms.



4. All building occupants must exit the building immediately when an alarm occurs even if it is known to be false alarm. Reentry can only occur with permission from the Fire Department.
5. The Fire Department may charge fees and penalties for false alarms. These costs may be charged back to the school/community partner at the discretion of the Senior Manager of Facility Services.

False Alarms - Security

1. Many false security alarms occur when staff enter or leave schools/locations when the alarm system is activated.
2. False security alarms can be caused by:
 - a. Entering a building while the alarm is armed and triggering a motion detector.
 - b. Artwork/displays that move when the HVAC system turns on and triggers a motion detector.
 - c. Staff stay beyond their designated building access time and the system has automatically armed.
3. The Board incurs a cost each time staff and security contractors are required to respond to false security alarms.
4. When a false security alarm is reported, Facility Services will investigate and determine if it is a technical problem in the system or if the alarm was triggered in error.
5. It is the responsibility of each staff member to know their permitted access times in WCDSB buildings to prevent false alarms. This information is provided when a fob is assigned or can be obtained by calling 519-578-3660, ext. 5555 during regular business hours.
6. Staff experiencing problems with security systems (i.e., arming/disarming, false alarm) after hours, must call the One Call Facilities Line 24/7/365 (519-578-3677 ext. 5555). An operator will connect the caller to a WCDSB Facilities staff member who will provide directions as required.
7. Staff responsible for triggering false alarms will be contacted by a Facility staff member who will outline WCDSB procedures and provide training if required. Staff who repeatedly trigger false alarms may be required to reimburse the Board for fees incurred and may be subject to disciplinary action.