

Fees and Charging

QFES charges for attendance at unwanted alarms to encourage building owners or occupiers to be continually proactive in managing fire alarm systems. QFES are empowered to do so under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990* Part 11 Charges for services. The decision to charge is not made by the attending QFES Officer.

Under the conditions of the Alarm Monitoring Agreement, the charge for attending unwanted alarm activations is made against the applicant for the Agreement (i.e. the building owner).

It is important to note that the amount charged does not cover the actual costs incurred by the QFES for attendance at any unwanted alarm activation. The charge recovers less than 25 percent of the estimated full cost of attending an unwanted alarm activation. QFES does not endorse 'on-charging' alarm attendance fees.

Building owners seeking to make changes to fire alarm systems must obtain approval from their building certifier who will refer the application to QFES. Attending firefighters do not provide this approval.

Don't let complacency put lives at risk.



For more information on unwanted alarm activations and industry professional advice, visit the QFES website at www.qfes.qld.gov.au.

Managing your unwanted fire alarm activations

Living with alarm systems



@QldFES



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www.qfes.qld.gov.au



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DO NOT RESET OR ISOLATE YOUR FIRE INDICATOR PANEL BEFORE QFES ARRIVES

For more information www.qfes.qld.gov.au

What is an unwanted alarm?

An unwanted alarm is defined as:

“...an emergency alarm signalled at a time when the Commissioner is satisfied there was no emergency requiring the attendance of the fire service”.

The risks

Unwanted alarms create complacency towards genuine alarms which can result in serious injury or loss of life.

The cost

- » Puts lives at risk due to a ‘culture of complacency’ created by unwanted alarms.
- » Business down time due to evacuations.
- » Financial impact of call-out charges.
- » Firefighting resources are unavailable for genuine emergencies.

The facts

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) responds to over 10,000 unwanted alarms annually. Unwanted alarm activations disrupt the community and put lives at risk.

Main causes

- » Burnt toast
- » Cooking fumes
- » Steam
- » Aerosols sprays
- » Cigarettes/Candles
- » Workmen/Cleaners
- » Dirty smoke detectors
- » ‘Break Glass’ alarm damage



Tips for residents to prevent unwanted alarms

- » Check toaster setting prior to use.
- » Stay beside a toaster that has been reset to further darken toast.
- » Smoke in designated smoking areas clear of smoke detectors.
- » Use aerosol spray in areas without a smoke detector.
- » Ensure staff/visitors know your building is protected by an automatic fire alarm system and provide these tips.
- » Manage work activities that produce dust, heat, smoke etc.
- » Ventilate steam and fumes away from smoke detectors – particularly from bathrooms and kitchens.

Special Notes for Building Owners

- » Understand your fire alarm system. Discuss your system details and requirements with your licensed fire alarm technician.
- » Ensure your fire alarm system is tested and maintained to the relevant standards by a licensed fire alarm technician.
- » Maintain a detailed log of all unwanted alarms. This can expose repeat causal factors e.g. occupant or system behavioral patterns, faulty components etc.
- » Implement and enforce an on-site works’ management plan that will prevent activations by workmen using tools such as welders and blowers.
- » Protect and isolate detectors when undertaking works which generate dust, smoke, steam or using spray paint etc.

Legislation

The *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990* authorises QFES to charge for attending unwanted alarms and issue notices to reduce excessive unwanted alarms.

Building Design

QFES publishes “Fire Alarm and Building Design Guidelines for the Reduction of Unwanted Alarms” for technical information on building design. Visit www.qfes.qld.gov.au to download a copy.