

Alarm Permits/Systems Frequently Asked Questions

Why does the City of Plano have an Alarm Unit?

The Plano Police and Fire Departments combined, respond to approximately 12,000 false alarms every year. Many valuable resources are tied up responding to these calls when real emergencies are occurring.

False alarms often cause unnecessary safety risks to emergency responders as well as citizens during a response. With the alarm companies, the user of the alarm system, and the Alarm Unit working together, we can significantly reduce the number of false alarms.

Who is required to have an alarm permit?

Any person or business that operates an alarm system, regardless of whether or not your alarm system is monitored. Each alarm system will need a permit.

If your building has multiple suites leased out, typically the building manager will have a permit for the building's fire alarm system and each tenant will be responsible for a permit if they choose to operate any additional alarm systems (e.g. burglar, panic, or robbery alarm systems).

Locations operating a smoke detector that is not connected to an alarm panel do not need a permit.

If your system is video surveillance only, a permit is necessary only if it is monitored by a monitoring company that will dispatch emergency services.

What if I operate my alarm system without having a valid permit?

An alarm system is a device that is intended to summon emergency services. Even with no permit, emergency services will still respond. In the event this occurs, owner information and emergency contacts need to be on file.

Operating an alarm without a valid permit is a Class C Misdemeanor and may result in a citation starting at \$266.00.

When should I apply for an alarm permit?

An alarm permit needs to be obtained prior to operating the alarm system. Most alarm companies require the permit be obtained prior to installation.

Where are you located?

The Alarms Unit offices out of the Plano Police Department Monday-Friday 7:30am-4:30pm.

The department is located at 909 14th Street, Plano, Texas 75074 on the corner of 14th Street and Avenue H.

An alternate location for payment *drop-off only* is at 7501-A Independence Parkway Plano, TX 75025. The building is connected to the Davis Library and is open Monday-Friday 8:00am-5:00pm.

What is your mailing address?

The mailing address is as follows:

Plano Police Department
Attn: Alarm Unit
PO Box 860358
Plano, Texas 75086

What methods of payment do you accept?

Cash, check, money order, Discover, MasterCard, and Visa. Checks can be made payable to "City of Plano"

What is the cost of an alarm permit?

Residential: \$50.00 Annually

Commercial: \$100.00 Annually

How do I apply for an alarm permit?

If the individual or business has *never* had a permit, an application can be submitted in the following ways:

Online

Click on "Apply for a New Permit" located on our website. Fill out the requested information and follow the steps to complete the process. If you encounter registration problems with your address, please call our office at (972) 941-2426 or email us at pdalarm@plano.gov.

By Mail

Applications can be printed and submitted via mail with a payment.

In Person

Applications can be accepted at the Plano Police Department during our office hours.

How can I pay to renew my alarm permit and/or pay false alarm fees?

Payments over the phone are not accepted, but can be made in the following ways:

Online

Click on "Manage Your Account" located on our website and enter the permit number in the "Account #" field. If you have never set up a password or need it reset, please call (972) 941-2426 or email us at pdalarm@plano.gov

In Person

Payments can be made at the Plano Police Department during our office hours or *dropped off* at the substation on Independence.

By Mail

It is recommended to mail your payment 3-4 business days prior to your expiration date to avoid late fees.

How do I update my contact information?

Changes can be made online. Click on "Manage Your Account" located on our website and enter the permit number in the "Account #" field. If you have never set up a password or need it reset, please call (972) 941-2426 or email us at pdalarm@plano.gov.

Changes can also be made by using the Cancel/Update Form. This form can be mailed, faxed, or emailed.

Are alarm permits transferrable?

If an alarm user moves, the permit number will follow the user to the new location. A Cancel/Update Form will need to be completed and sent in. There is no fee to transfer.

Permits *cannot* be transferred to different people or businesses.

How do I cancel my permit?

Cancellations are accepted by email, fax, mail, and in person. Alarm users can use the Cancel/Update Form or request the cancellation in letter format. Please include the permit number, address, name, and reason.

If you ever need to re-activate your permit, you will keep the original permit number. Contact our office with assistance or send in a Cancel/Update Form with your original permit number on it.

How much does a false alarm cost?

Burglar Alarms

Burglar alarms are counted by looking at the previous 12 months. Each permit will receive alarms 1-3 free. Anything greater than 3 alarms is considered excessive and will be charged as follows:

4th & 5th Alarm is \$50.00

6th & 7th Alarm is \$75.00

8 or more alarms are \$100.00 each and the permit may be suspended.

Robbery Alarms

Robbery alarms are counted by looking at the previous 12 months. Each permit will receive alarms 1-2 free. Any robbery alarm after 2 will be charged \$200.00 each.

Panic Alarms

Panic alarms are counted by looking at the previous 12 months. Each permit will receive alarms 1-2 free. Any panic alarm after 2 will be charged \$75.00 each.

Fire Alarms

Each permit is allowed 2 free alarms for the life of the permit. Any alarms after 2 will be charged \$200.00 each.

Why do you charge an additional \$35 fee if I fail to renew my permit on time?

The fee is collected to cover the administrative costs associated with a permit de-activation. A permit is only de-activated 30 days after the expiration date. At that time, 2 notifications have been sent out as reminders. The fee is set out in the ordinance and may not be waived.

Can I appeal false alarm fees?

Appeals can be mailed or emailed. The request must include the account information and the reason for your request. Appeals are *not* generally granted as a result of the following:

- Pets, rodents, or wildlife.
- Improper monitoring or installation by the monitoring company.
- Maintenance or testing by an alarm company.
- Weather, unless physical damage was made to the location and evidence can be provided.
- Mistakes by anyone authorized to be on the property.
- Loose doors or windows that activate an alarm.

Is the Plano Police Department capable of receiving video if my alarm system is monitored with a camera system?

Yes, Public Safety Communications (Dispatch) is capable of receiving short video clips from a commercial alarm monitoring service.