



# ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## TAKE THESE STEPS TO PREVENT FALSE ALARMS

### **Monthly Maintenance Makes a Difference**

- Send a test signal to your alarm company every month. This will help to identify problems you may not know about until the system malfunctions. Follow your alarm company procedures before activating the test signal, to prevent an unnecessary law enforcement dispatch.
- Check the system batteries regularly, especially if you experience several power outages. It is easy to remember if you make a point of checking the batteries every six months when you check your smoke detector batteries.
- Check all of the contacts on your doors and windows every six months. Make sure they are in good condition and properly adhered to the surface. Pay special attention to the wiring and the condition of the surfaces the contacts are installed on. Notify your alarm company as soon as possible if you feel the contacts or wiring are in need of repair or replacement.
- Check all houseplants for lizards, spiders, or other "critters" that may crawl across a motion detector lens, and clean the motion sensors of dust, cobwebs, debris and insects regularly. Anything in front of or adhering to the lens can cause a false alarm.

### **Before Arming the System**

- Make sure family pets are in an area where they will not activate motion sensors. You can also ask your alarm company if installing a "pet alley" would be an option in order to allow certain sized pets access to alarmed areas without activating the system.
- Be sure ceiling fans are turned off and there are no hanging banners or balloons in any area where a motion sensor is located.
- Close and lock all doors and windows; a breeze can move curtains and plants causing a false alarm, and a glass break detector may activate in reaction to outside noise.

### **Training is Important**

- All users of your alarm system (including cleaning personnel, employees, family members, friends, etc.) should have a password and be trained in the proper operation of the system, including how to arm and disarm the system and how to cancel a false alarm dispatch with the alarm company.
- **Florida State Statute 489.529 requires the monitoring company to try and verify an audible alarm signal before contacting the Sheriff's Office for dispatch.** Be sure all users of the system know it is important to answer the phone if it rings right after the alarm signal activates, as it is most likely the monitoring company calling to verify the signal and determine if it is a false alarm or a real emergency.

### **Planning in Advance**

- Notify your alarm company in advance of any new construction planned for the structure, and any changes you plan to make to your phone service, such as installing call waiting or switching to VOIP, in order to ensure the continued integrity of the alarm system.