

We will always attend for AFA activations:

- In domestic and residential buildings.
- At other places where people sleep and identified higher risk premises.
- At any premises where a fire is suspected; on receipt of a 999 call; or by confirmation through other means.



What are the benefits to you?

A well maintained and correctly functioning fire alarm system provides substantial benefits for your business in the event of a fire. This swift intervention can:

- Save lives – providing time for your staff and visitors to evacuate the premises safely.
- Protect your business and property- reduce business loss, limit property damage, and minimise insurance claims.
- Protect the environment - reducing the impact of fire and firefighting.

Where to get more help

If false alarms continue to be a problem, contact your alarm installer or maintenance contractor. Any changes to your fire alarm system should be risk assessed prior to implementation.

Investigating activations

Always ensure the building is evacuated in accordance with emergency procedures:

- Where possible two people should investigate when the alarm activates.
- Check the fire alarm panel for information, a full zone plan should be available.
- Ensure a member of staff remains at the alarm panel and keeps in contact with the investigators.
- Look and smell for smoke, listening for unusual sounds. If it doesn't feel right, leave the building by the nearest fire exit and dial 999.
- Detectors that have activated should display a solid red LED indicator.
- Ensure all alarm activations and tests are recorded in your log book.

You should, take your fire alarm system offline when carrying out your weekly test. This could save you money and stop the fire service being alerted unnecessarily.

For further information, please visit our website at dwfire.org.uk and navigate to the Business Fire Safety page or use the QR code below:



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE**

Helping you to reduce false alarms from automatic fire alarm systems





What's changing?

From April 2024, Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue

Service will no longer attend Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) at commercial premises. We will always attend premises where we know people are sleeping and those with higher risk occupants.

The Service attended 1946 AFAs in commercial premises which were confirmed false alarms during 2022/23 - responding to AFAs can cause unnecessary risk to fire crews and the public, take up crucial time, and may delay a response to a genuine emergency.

In addition, every AFA can cost your business money through lost production, and disrupt the routine of your organisation.

Cost recovery

AFA activations which require a response represent a financial draw on limited resources, meaning money must be taken from other emergency provisions. Where we have made every effort to help you reduce this burden, but have been unable to achieve a satisfactory solution, a charge may be imposed on a cost-recovery basis.

The causes

Unwanted fire signals have many different causes, most of which can be dealt with by careful planning. Investigating the causes of false alarms will provide you with important information to help manage your system.

The correct positioning of detection devices and call points is essential. False alarms can be caused by activation of the system for reasons other than a genuine fire, including:

- Pollutants in the air setting off detectors (cooking fumes, aerosols, steam etc.).
- Incorrect detector type.
- Vandalism or malicious acts.
- Incorrect use of the system.
- Equipment being faulty or not maintained properly.
- Fire detectors or manual call points in the wrong place.
- Fire detection system not appropriate for the building.
- Testing the system without informing your alarm receiving centre.
- Contractors working on site or other aggravating work processes.

What should you do?

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, requires occupiers/owners to maintain their fire alarm system adequately. The Responsible Person must nominate people with sufficient training or knowledge so that:

- The fire alarm system is tested weekly, in accordance with the relevant British Standard (BS 5839).
- The system remains in good working order and is maintained by a competent person.
- Those with specific responsibilities have appropriate training.
- All alarm activations are investigated, and action taken to solve any problems.
- Activities which may adversely affect the system are controlled.
- Keep the fire alarm system under review.

Did you know?

Section 156 of the Building Safety Act 2022 imposes new duties on businesses and building owners. Main changes include:

- You must record both the fire risk assessment and fire safety arrangements in full.
- Requirement to cooperate and coordinate between Responsible Persons in multi-occupied buildings.
- In residential buildings with two or more domestic premises, you must now inform residents about the risks from fire within their building, and the fire safety measures provided to keep them safe.

