
HILLSBOROUGH POLICE DEPARTMENT

RESIDENTIAL ALARM SYSTEM INFORMATION

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF ALARM SYSTEMS

ALL ALARM SYSTEMS HAVE DISTINCT SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES. All systems include areas that are monitored, such as doors and windows. All include some sort of computer panel or device to send a signal, via a telephone line, to a **monitoring station**. The monitoring station is one central place that acts as the link between your alarm and system and whoever you utilize to respond to alarm activation. Traditionally, this is a police department, but it could also be a private security firm.

MONITORING OPTIONS

One of the main differences between alarm systems is based on monitoring.

Direct Monitoring In Hillsborough, one has the unique option of monitoring by the police department directly. This means that the signal goes straight from your residence to our dispatch center via your telephone line.

The Hillsborough Dispatcher views the activation information on their computer, and relays the information to officers in the field. Dispatchers are also able to look up pertinent information from our residents data file as well as retrieve and provide a key for the responding officers if needed.

Our software utilized for this purpose is state of the art, and capable of accepting and displaying dozens of alarm activations at the same time. Our own alarms are the only ones we monitor so we are able to respond to activations with extreme speed and efficiency. Most police departments are not able to offer this service.

Alarm Company Monitoring Another option for the monitoring of your alarm system is to have the alarm monitored by an agency outside of the Hillsborough Police Department. This would mean that your signal goes from the alarm system in your home, via the telephone line, to a remote site that has monitoring personnel.

Once received at the remote monitoring site, that person receives the information and relays it, via a second telephone call, to the Hillsborough Police Department.

The problem with this system is the inherent delay. We have documented delays in the 5-7 minute range between the time the alarm is received and the time that the alarm is reported to our Dispatcher.

We are proud of having a response time that averages less than 5 minutes. It can be dangerous to have a delay in the reporting of a problem at your residence.

WHAT FEES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE DIRECT MONITORING OPTION?

If you elect to have your alarm monitored by the Hillsborough Police Department, you will be charged a monthly fee of \$24.

A \$60 alarm permit fee is also charged annually to all Hillsborough residents who maintain an alarm system in the Town of Hillsborough regardless of who monitors the system.

WHY DO I HAVE TO PAY A FEE AT ALL?

It is surprising, but alarm responses account for 40% of **all** calls for service by the Hillsborough Police Department. Only a small fraction of these calls are not *false alarms*.

Responding to alarm calls consumes a large portion of our resources, and the fees assessed represent only a partial subsidy of the actual cost.

WHAT DO I DO NOW?

You may do one of the following:

Change from Alarm Company Monitoring to Direct Monitoring

If you want to change from being monitored by your alarm company to being monitored directly by the Hillsborough Police Department, you must go through two steps. The first step is to advise your alarm company that you no longer wish to be monitored by them, and arrange to have them convert your system to direct monitoring.

This will mean that you will no longer pay your alarm company for alarm monitoring; you will still need to pay for alarm servicing. Understandably, some alarm companies are reluctant to perform this service, and thus lose additional revenue. If you experience any problems, please contact the alarm specialists at the Hillsborough Police Department and we will assist you during the transition.

The second step is to fill out the *Alarm System Monitoring Agreement Form* agreeing to direct monitoring.

A monthly \$24 fee will be added to your bi-monthly water bill. You will pay this fee in addition to the annual alarm permit fee.

You will still need to utilize an alarm company for any repairs, changes or maintenance needed for your alarm system. At this point, the Hillsborough Police Department does not offer this service.

If you need the name of an alarm company, please contact the Hillsborough Police Department for a list of local alarm companies.

Remove Myself from Direct Monitoring

If you are currently monitored by the Hillsborough Police Department and want another agency to monitor your alarm, simply advise the Hillsborough Finance Department using the *Alarm System Monitoring Agreement Form*. You will only be charged the annual \$60 alarm permit fee.

Sign Up for Direct Monitoring

If you want to continue direct monitoring by the Hillsborough Police Department and you have not completed the *Alarm System Monitoring Agreement Form*, please complete one.

WHY AM I CHARGED AN ANNUAL FEE FOR HAVING AN ALARM SYSTEM?

The annual \$60 fee is designed to pay for maintaining all the information about your residence. We record and have instantly available emergency contact numbers for each alarm system.

We have a secure key file in case of an emergency where we need to gain access to your property. We also need to periodically update this information when your system is changed or your contact information changes.

I STILL HAVE QUESTIONS.

Please contact the alarm specialists directly, and we will attempt to clarify any areas that have not been adequately explained.

Contact the Hillsborough Police Alarm Specialist at (650) 375-7472.