HOW TO REQUEST AN ALARM HEARING

Please read this document in its entirety before completing your alarm hearing request.

Instructions are outlined below if you choose to dispute a false alarm or non-permitted alarm notice.

If you have any questions or need additional information prior to submitting the request, call the Burglar Alarm Administration (BAA) at 832-394-8802 or visit: www.houstonburglaralarmpermits.org.

Pursuant to City of Houston Code of Ordinances, Chapter 11, Article III, the City of Houston’s Administration & Regulatory Affairs Department regulates the activities and establishes the responsibilities of persons who purchase, rent, operate or use an alarm system and to the full extent permitted by Texas law, persons who engage in the business of selling, leasing, renting, installing, maintaining or monitoring alarm systems.

Section 11-68 (f) “If the permit holder, or an alarm subscriber or other person-in-control if there is no valid alarm permit, disputes any part of the false or non-permitted alarm notice, such person (known as appellant) must mail or deliver a written statement to the director requesting a hearing. The request for hearing must be received by the director not later than the 30th day following the date that the city places the false or non-permitted alarm notice in the mail.”

Section 11-68 (j) “At the hearing, the burden shall be upon the appellant to demonstrate by a preponderance of the evidence that the alarm was not false or generated by a non-permitted alarm system. If the appellant fails to appear at the hearing, the penalty assessed in connection with the notice of the false alarm or alarm generated by a non-permitted alarm system shall be affirmed based on the appellant’s failure to appear.”

Please follow the instructions outlined below if you choose to dispute a false alarm or non-permitted alarm notice.

TO REQUEST AN ALARM HEARING:

1. Gather facts, documents, and/or records to prove:
   a. Alarm was true and not false
      i. Copy of the police report confirming a break-in or robbery
   b. Alarm was generated by a permitted alarm system (bring a copy of the active and valid permit for the alarm site)
   c. Alarm did not occur at your location.
      i. Copy of a police report
      ii. Alarm company activity report showing no alarms occurred on the incident date
      iii. Letter from your alarm company indicating no request was issued to dispatch the Houston Police Department (HPD)
   d. You were not the owner of the property at the time of the false alarms
   e. Residential or non-residential site is not within the Houston city limits and the Code of Ordinances do not apply to the site.

2. Complete an alarm hearing request statement by:
   a. Individually composing a written statement which includes the information required on the Alarm Hearing Request form
      OR
   b. Filling out the City of Houston Alarm Hearing Request Form found at www.burglaralarmpermits.org under the FORMS tabs. Using the convenient, fillable, PDF Alarm Hearing Request Form is highly recommended. The form must be completely filled out to be considered.

3. Mail or deliver the written statement or completed Alarm Hearing Request Form along with supporting documents (facts, documents, and/or records) to the City of Houston Burglar Alarm Administration. Submit the written statement or completed form and supporting documentation before the 30th day following the mailing date of the notice.

Mailing Address
City of Houston
Administration & Regulatory Affairs
Burglar Alarm Administration
P.O. Box 1561
Houston, Texas 77251-1561

Physical Address
Houston Permitting Center
Administration & Regulatory Affairs
Burglar Alarm Administration
1002 Washington Avenue
Houston, Texas 77002
4. Upon receiving the written statement or completed Alarm Hearing Request and supporting documentation, the BAA will review the alarm hearing request and documentation.

5. If a hearing is granted, a hearing date and time will be selected for you. The BAA will notify you by mail and either by email or telephone call.

6. If a hearing is not granted, the BAA will notify you by mail and provide an explanation.

7. If you are unable to appear on the designated date and time, contact the BAA at 832-394-8802 within 24 hours of the designated hearing date and time to reschedule for the next available day. If you do not call the BAA, you will lose the opportunity to reschedule and you will be responsible for the penalty and fee(s).

8. At the conclusion of the alarm hearing, a final decision will be made and announced verbally. A written decision will be given to you. The decision of the hearing officer is final.

9. Any penalty and fee(s) associated with an alarm determined to have been false or an alarm determined to have been generated by a non-permitted alarm system, must be paid within 15 days following the date the final decision is mailed or hand-delivered to you.

A false alarm hearing will not be granted if the alarm was activated due to the following reasons including, but not limited to:

- Caretaker(s) overseeing a residential or non-residential site while owners were not present
- No evidence of any criminal activity present
- Alarm technicians repairing or servicing the alarm system
- Any noise and/or sound other than actual glass breaking which caused glass break detectors to activate
- Any door(s) or window(s) becoming loose and causing any loss of contact
- Apartment management employees
- Defective, faulty, and/or malfunctioning equipment
- Improper installation or maintenance by the alarm system company or alarm user
- Improper monitoring by alarm system company
- Improper use by alarm system user
- Mistakes made by cleaning crew, family members, housekeeper, private contractors, etc.
- Movement caused by items such as but not limited to: window curtains, signs, home décor, balloons, falling objects etc. within a residential or non-residential site which activated the motion detector
- Pets, rodents, wildlife, etc.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING AN ALARM HEARING

You will be allotted 10-15 minutes for the hearing at which time you may present any other relevant information specific to the status of the alarm incident. Please arrive at the hearing prepared to present your case.

False alarm and non-permitted hearings are an informal process and any HPD records associated with this incident may be used during the hearing.

*Please note that a collection fee of 30% will be added to the false alarm penalty if the false alarm penalty is not paid by the 61st day after it is due. All collection fees are due on the date they are added to the false alarm penalty.

Visit [www.houstonburglaralarmpermits.org](http://www.houstonburglaralarmpermits.org) for additional information. Click the FAQs tab to view the Alarm Hearing Process for False Alarms and Non-Permitted FAQs. For the Alarm Hearing Request Form, click the FORMS tab to download the form.

Contact:
City of Houston - Burglar Alarm Administration
P.O. Box 203887
Houston, Texas 77216-3887
Telephone: 713-581-7410
Fax: 281-779-4188