



GUARDIAN
FIRE & SAFETY
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The Top 8 Causes of False Fire Alarms in Businesses - and How to Prevent Them

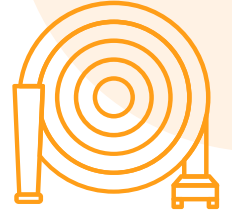
False fire alarms can be disruptive and costly for businesses, leading to:

1. Unnecessary evacuations and downtime
2. Frustrated customers
3. Fire brigade fees
4. Unnecessary insurance claims
5. Risks to those experiencing real emergencies
6. Complacency and reduced confidence in the Fire Detection & Alarm system

The good news is that most false fire alarms are preventable by understanding and managing the common causes.



Common Causes & Prevention of False Fire Alarms



1. Fumes/Gases

Causes:

Painting/Decorating, Vehicle Emissions, Cooking, Oil Fired Boilers
Cleaning/Sterilisation

Prevention:

- Use heat detectors where legislation and the risk allows such as in kitchens/canteens.
- Close doors and ensure extract systems are functional during cooking.
- Consult with your fire alarm maintenance provider in advance of undertaking any renovations, remedial or deep cleaning works.

2. Steam

Causes:

Dishwashers, Burco Boilers, Kettles, Showers, Steam Cleaning

Prevention:

- Consider switching to multi-sensors or heat detectors where legislation and the risk allows.
- Keep doors closed when using showers and use extractor fans.
- Avoid placing burco boilers or kettles directly under detectors.

3. Smoke

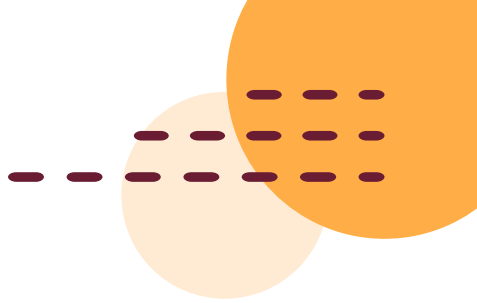
Causes:

Cigarette Smoke, Electronic Cigarette Vapours, Smoke Machines, Candles, Smoke from nearby areas

Prevention:

- Clearly mark designated smoking areas.
- Inform staff and customers that electronic cigarettes can trigger detectors.
- Ensure proper separation between smoking areas and other parts of the building.
- Avoid burning candles where possible.
- Close windows and doors where there is a risk of smoke ingress from nearby areas.





4. Aerosols

Causes:

Cleaning Products, Deodorants, Air Fresheners

Prevention:

- Avoid spraying aerosols near detectors.
- Position automatic air fresheners away from detectors.
- Train cleaning staff on proper usage.

5. Hot Work

Causes:

Welding, Soldering, Plumbing, Drilling, Grinding, Cutting, Sanding, Carpentry, Tiling

Prevention:

- Implement a permit system smoke or dust generating tasks.
- Brief external contractors on the Fire Detection & Alarm system.
- Covering detectors during works can help to reduce contamination. However, it is essential that the covers are removed at the end of each working day.

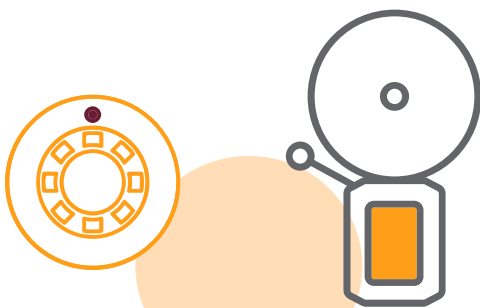
6. Environmental

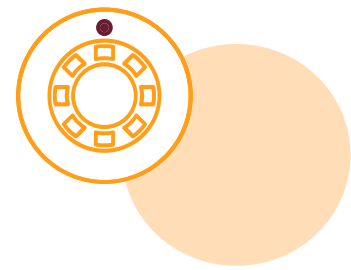
Causes:

Weather, Humidity, Temperature Fluctuations, Insect Ingress, Moisture/Water Ingress

Prevention:

- Use multi – sensors in areas with frequent changes in air flow where legislation and the risk allows.
- If you notice a lot of insects around your detectors, wipe the outside of the detector housing with a cloth and insect repellent. Avoid spraying repellent directly on or towards the detector.
- Maintain consistent room temperatures and practice good building maintenance.





7. Accidental or Malicious Damage

Causes:

Staff, Customers, Visitors, Contractors

Prevention:

- Protect equipment such as break glass units with approved covers or cages especially in high traffic areas such as corridors etc.
- Use CCTV to deter malicious activations.
- Create awareness by providing staff training.

8. Equipment Malfunction, System Testing & Maintenance

Causes:

Equipment failure, Improper configuration of Fire Detection & Alarm System, Fire Alarm Testing, Maintenance of other Systems.

Prevention:

- Only use accredited Fire Detection & Alarm system providers for installation, servicing, and maintenance works.
- Maintain your system in accordance with Irish Standards and plan for upgrades especially if older than 10 years.
- Schedule routine tests and notify staff/customers in advance.

What to do after a False Fire Alarm:

- Investigate and identify the cause to prevent reoccurrence.
- Record the activation in your fire register/fire alarm logbook.
- Reset the fire alarm control panel.
- If you experience frequent false fire alarms, consult your fire alarm maintenance provider.

Guardian Fire & Safety has been helping businesses and other organisations to protect lives and livelihoods for more than 20 years. **Got a question? Contact us today** - we will be happy to help you too!

051 448774
www.guardianfire.ie

