

# Managing your Unwanted Fire Alarms

## *Living with Alarm Systems*

## Fees and Charging

### Why does NTFRS charge?

In part, NTFRS charges for attendance at unwanted alarms to encourage building owners or occupiers to be continually proactive in managing fire alarm systems.

### Who makes the charging decision?

The determination of whether a charge is levied is NOT made by the attending NTFRS officer at the time of the unwanted alarm.

This determination is made by NTFRS Community Fire Safety NTFAST Alarm Management in accordance with NTFRS Unwanted False Alarm Policy.

### On-billing:

- △ Owners are responsible and accountable under the NTFRS Alarm Monitoring Agreement for the payment of services provided.
- △ NTFRS is not involved where premise owners forward unwanted false alarm costs on to a third party, such as hotel guests when the activation resulted from normal occupant activities such as cooking and showering.
- △ NTFRS does not support premise owners recovering service costs on to a third party, such as a hotel guest, when the activation resulted from normal occupant activities such as cooking and showering.
- △ NTFRS Policy requires the false alarm charge for response to privately monitored premises to be sent to the monitoring company.
- △ Response to residential properties with home smoke alarms rung in by neighbours in good faith are not subject to charging.

## For more information:

[www.fire.nt.gov.au](http://www.fire.nt.gov.au)

- △ General Public Information
- △ Industry Professional Information
- △ Unwanted Alarm - Frequently Asked Questions
- △ NTFAST
- △ Building Connection Agreement Form
- △ Fire Alarm System Management
- △ Managing False Alarms
- △ Required Fire System Maintenance
- △ Responsibilities of Management/Individuals
- △ Northern Territory Legislative Requirements



Owners seeking to make changes to fire alarm systems must obtain approval from their building certifier who will refer the application to NTFRS.

Attending fire-fighters do not provide that approval.

***Don't let complacency put lives at risk***

**Alarms Save Lives**  
[www.fire.nt.gov.au](http://www.fire.nt.gov.au)



# Managing your **Unwanted** Fire Alarms

## What is an Unwanted Alarm?

An unwanted alarm is defined as:

“Where the NTFRS has attended in response to an alarm installed and there is in fact no fire or other emergency”.

## The Risks

Unwanted Alarms create complacency towards genuine alarms which can result in serious injury or loss of life.

## The Cost

- △ Lives at risk due to a ‘culture of complacency’ created by unwanted alarms.
- △ Business down time due to evacuations.
- △ Financial impact of call-out charges.
- △ Firefighting resources are unavailable for genuine emergencies.

## The Facts

Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service (NTFRS) responds to approximately 3,000 unwanted alarms annually.

**Unwanted Alarms disrupt the community and put lives at risk.**

## Main Causes

- △ Burnt toast
- △ Cooking fumes
- △ Steam
- △ Aerosols sprays
- △ Cigarettes/Candles
- △ Workmen/Cleaners
- △ Dirty Smoke Detectors
- △ ‘Break Glass’ Alarm Damage
- △ Poor building maintenance



## Tips to Prevent Unwanted Alarms

- ✓ Check toaster setting prior to use.
- ✓ DO NOT walk away from a toaster that has been reset to further darken toast.
- ✓ DO NOT smoke near smoke detectors.
- ✓ DO NOT direct aerosol spray at smoke detectors.
- ✓ Understand YOUR fire alarm system – particularly the type and location of detectors.
- ✓ Manage work activities that produce dust, heat, smoke etc. to ensure a detector is not activated.
- ✓ Ventilate steam and fumes away from smoke detectors – particularly from bathrooms and kitchens.
- ✓ Ensure staff/visitors know your building is protected by an automatic fire alarm system and provide these tips.

## Special Notes for Building Owners

- ✓ Ensure YOUR fire alarm system is tested and maintained to the relevant Standards by a recognised fire alarm technician.
- ✓ Maintain a detailed log of all unwanted alarms. This can expose causal factors e.g. occupant or system behavioural patterns, faulty components etc.
- ✓ Implement and enforce an on-site works’ management plan that will prevent activations by workmen using welders, blowers and the like.
- ✓ Protect and isolate detectors when undertaking works which generate dust, smoke, steam or using spray paint and the like.

## Legislation

The *Fire and Emergency Act 2010* authorises the NTFRS to charge for attending unwanted alarms and issue notices to reduce excessive unwanted alarms.

## Fire System Information

NTFRS have developed guidelines for the reduction of Unwanted Alarms. Refer to [www.fire.nt.gov.au](http://www.fire.nt.gov.au), click on “NTFAST” for technical information relating to false alarms of fire and required building and fire system maintenance.

**DO NOT RESET OR ISOLATE YOUR FIRE INDICATOR PANEL BEFORE THE NTFRS ARRIVES**

For more information [www.fire.nt.gov.au](http://www.fire.nt.gov.au)