

Frequently Asked Fire Alarm Questions

1. What should I do if I hear a fire alarm?

Evacuate your building immediately and go to the area your supervisor has designated as a meeting point. For safety reasons, you should evacuate if you hear any alarm, even if it is not in your zone. Stetson's alarm system is a zone system and will alarm only in the zone where a device is activated. A general alarm can be sounded from the main panel that would alarm the entire core campus.

2. What should I not do if I hear a fire alarm?

Do not call Public Safety to inquire if the alarm you hear is "real" or "false." During alarms, Public Safety is extremely busy confirming the source and cause of the alarm. Incoming calls from the alarm monitoring company, 911 emergency, and the responding fire departments must take precedence on the phone lines.

Do not stay in an office, classroom, library, dorm, or other place where you may be in the building just because you don't smell smoke, see fire, or decide these "things" always go off.

All alarms are to be taken seriously! Not all alarms are because of fire!

3. Should I lock my door?

Dorm residents should lock their doors. Office personnel should not lock their offices.

4. What should I take with me when evacuating?

Yourself. This is not a time to be concerned with possessions. However, if they are nearby, take your purse/wallet and keys.

5. What is the difference between a real and false alarm?

None. All alarms are real and are caused by a break in the electrical current passing through the alarm system. Alarms can be sounded by someone activating a pull station, by something as simple as toast burning near a smoke detector, or by an actual fire. If an alarm sounds, something caused it. It might not be a fire, but don't bet your life on it. All alarms should be treated as though they were caused by fire until it can be determined otherwise by a competent authority, such as the responding Fire Department. Over the years we have developed a dangerous complacency in response to fire alarms due to the overuse of the term "false alarm" to characterize an alarm not caused by actual fire.

6. *What should dorm residents do when an alarm sounds?*

Evacuate the building. Do not call Public Safety to ask if the alarm is “real.” Do not stay in your dorm assuming the alarm was not caused by fire.

Public Safety suggests that dorm residents form a “buddy” relationship with other dorm residents. For example, two or three dorm residents would have a predetermined place to meet in the event of a fire alarm. If all the students arrive, all is well. If one or more students do not arrive, the other student (s) should inform Public Safety or the Fire Department of the missing person (s) and inform them of the dorm room so it can be checked.

7. *Where should I go once I evacuate my building?*

Staff members should go to an area designated by their supervisor away from the building.

Students in classrooms, the library, clinics, and other areas should evacuate the building and proceed to a location away from the buildings where alarms are sounding. This also applies to vendors and visitors on campus at the time of an alarm.

Dorm students should follow suggestions offered in question #4. Always evacuate the building and move away from the affected area.

All evacuations must be away from all affected buildings. Do not stand under breezeways or covered areas in buildings that are in alarm.

8. *What are fire marshals? Who is my fire marshal?*

Campus fire marshals have been assigned to all major areas of the campus. These marshals are staff members whose primary responsibility is to check to make sure that people are leaving their assigned areas during a fire, fire alarm, or other emergency situation.

A listing of campus fire marshals is sent via e-mail to all faculty, staff, and students. The current list is also posted on the Public Safety bulletin board across from the Public Safety Office.

9. *If I believe someone is missing, what should I do?*

Inform a Public Safety Officer or Fire Fighter about your concern.

10. *What happens if someone remains in the building during an alarm?*

They could be in mortal danger at the worst, or in violation of state law at the least.

11. What should I do during alarm testing?

You may stay in your office, classroom, dorm, etc. during alarm testing. A few days in advance, Public Safety will announce testing via e-mail. Public Safety will issue a second announcement immediately before the testing begins. Testing usually will be conducted with short bursts of the alarms. If you hear an alarm and no testing was announced, evacuate. Testing *usually* will be conducted on days that will cause the least inconvenience, such as late Fridays, during school breaks, or on weekends. However, this may not always be the case. If we have alarm problems or system failures they must be tested during repairs.

12. How do we know when it is “all clear”?

Our current technology does not have the capability to sound an “all clear” alarm to the entire campus. At present, Public Safety Officers and other designated persons patrol the campus spreading the “all clear” for people to return to their offices, dorms, classrooms, etc. Do not return simply because the alarm has stopped sounding.