

Frequently Asked Fire Alarm Questions

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

You should evacuate the building immediately and go to the area your supervisor has designated as a meeting point. If you are a student, proceed to a location away from the buildings where alarms are sounding, or smoke or fire are present. 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 any other place just because you do not smell smoke, see fire, or decide it's a false alarm.

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, though there are some highly sensitive offices that should lock their doors unless their offices are directly impacted by the fire or smoke. These offices are listed in the College's Fire Safety Plan.

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 phone, 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 due to the use of a fire pull station or fire detection device sensing smoke or heat. 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 do not 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, who is the authority having jurisdiction. 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 or where smoke or fire are present. 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 Safety Coordinators? Who is my Fire Safety Coordinator?*

Campus Fire Safety Coordinators have been assigned to all major areas of the campus. These coordinators 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.

A listing of campus Fire Safety Coordinators is sent via e-mail to all faculty, staff, and students, and can also be found in the Fire Safety Plan.

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. Whenever possible, Public Safety will announce testing in advance 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, system failures, or construction requiring new device testing, they must be tested according to time sensitive need.

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

An announcement will be made over the Emergency Notification System and Public Safety Officers and other designated persons will 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.