



Derbyshire
Fire & Rescue Service
Making Derbyshire Safer

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signal Procedure

Frequently Asked Questions

When are the changes happening?

The new procedure will start at 0900 on Tuesday 5 March 2019.

Do other Fire Services have the same policy?

Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire FRSs have exactly the same procedure. Many Fire Services have adopted similar arrangements although there are some differences between different areas.

What is call challenging?

Call challenging is a process used in some situations to prevent unnecessary attendances. The caller is asked a series of questions to determine if an emergency response is required. This may result in the caller being asked to investigate the cause of the alarm and to look for any signs of fire.

Are all premises call challenged?

No. Many premises will attract an immediate response and will not be call challenged. Those exempt from call challenging are:

- All domestic premises including Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO), Residential flats, & Sheltered housing
- Residential care and nursing homes
- Hospitals which have sleeping on site
- Hotels during night-time hours only 21:00 - 08:00. During the day, hotels will be call challenged
- High Rise Premises with a sleeping risk
- Any other sleeping risks
- Sites that are subject to Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI) National PORIS Level 4 and 5 or sites classed as a COMAH site.

- Heritage sites listed as Grade 1 or Grade II* by Historic England
- A premises not conforming to the above criteria but is locally determined to be unsuitable for call challenging

I employ an Alarm Receiving Company to monitor my fire alarm. How will I be effected?

If your premises is an exempt premises, you will still get an immediate response.

If your premises is not exempt and we receive a call from your Alarm Receiving Company (ARC), we will call challenge to collect more information. The ARC may be asked to contact the key holder or premises directly to ascertain if there is an actual fire. We will not mobilise unless a fire is confirmed.

If I am asked to investigate the alarm, what should I do?

If you are willing to investigate the alarm then remember DO NOT put yourself in danger.

Look for the signs of fire. This can include visible flames or smoke, the smell of burning, strange noises, lights flickering, increased heat.

It is important to understand that we are not asking people to look for a fire, only the signs of one.

- Where possible, don't search for signs alone. Consider searching in pairs.
- Check the fire alarm panel to find where the alarm has activated – it's vital that you have a full zone or detector plan displayed immediately adjacent to the panel.
- Have another member of staff at the alarm panel and remain in contact (mobile phone or short range radios are ideal for this purpose).
- When investigating look, listen and smell for signs of fire. It might be smoke, unusual noises or heat and could be any one, some, or all of those signs.

- Before opening a door, look through the vision panel. Feel the door with the back of your hand, as high up the door as you can reach, for signs of heat. If it is hot do not open the door.
- If at any time you discover signs of fire, raise the alarm, get out using the nearest fire exit and call the fire service on 999. Tell us that an investigation has taken place and this is a call to a FIRE and not just an alarm sounding.

I am responsible for fire safety at work, what should I do now?

- Make sure that your ARC has the correct information they need. This includes the right address, premises phone number and the up-to-date list and details of key holders.
- Check that your risk assessment and evacuation plan is up-to-date.
- Ensure that your fire alarm and detection system is properly designed, installed and maintained properly
- Make sure that staff know what to do in the event of the fire alarm activating. This may include some specifically trained staff being responsible for checking for signs of fire.
- If any signs of fire are found, ensure that there is a designated member of staff to call the Fire and Rescue Service by calling 999.
- Ensure that any false alarms are properly recorded in the fire alarm log book, including remedial actions taken to prevent a recurrence.



Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service
Butterley Hall
Ripley
Derbyshire
DE5 3RS

Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive
Terry McDermott MA

T 01773 305305