

# English Vocabulary: Alarms

Most businesses and many residences have alarm systems. Here is some vocabulary which we use when talking about alarms.



## Verbs

### 1. to go off

This phrasal verb means the alarm is activated and makes a loud noise.

- The alarm always **goes off** when a cat passes through.
- My car alarm **went off** at 2am last night.
- Excuse me, my alarm **has just gone off**. I'll be back in a moment.

### 2. to sound

This means that we deliberately activate an alarm.

- Bank manager: "**Sound** the alarm – the bank is being robbed!"
- The factory alarm **sounds** at midday to let the workers know that it's lunchtime.

### 3. to ring

This is used to describe the noise of an alarm or to manually activate an alarm.

- I can hear an alarm **ringing** – maybe we should evacuate the building.
- Please **ring** the alarm – there is smoke in the bathroom.

### 4. to trip (an alarm)

This means that an alarm is activated when an electronic sensor detects motion, light or sound.

- A burglar **tripped** the alarm at midnight last night.
- It's so easy to **trip** my house alarm – even a fly can **trip** it!

### 5. to trigger (an alarm)

This verb is a synonym of "to trip".

- A burglar **triggered** the alarm at midnight last night.
- It's so easy to **trigger** my house alarm – even a fly can **trigger** it!

### 6. to set off

This phrasal verb is also a synonym of "to trip".

- A burglar **set off** the alarm at midnight last night.
- It's so easy to **set off** my house alarm – even a fly can **set it off**!

### 7. to set

This means to configure an alarm, in terms of activation, time settings, etc.

- On weekdays, I **set** my alarm clock for 6am. However, at weekends, I **set** it for 9am.

### 8. to turn on

This phrasal verb means to make the alarm ready for use.

- Every time I park in the street, I **turn on** my car alarm.
- I don't **turn on** the restaurant alarm when the restaurant is open.

### 9. to arm

This verb is a synonym of "to turn on", but it is more formal or technical.

- The factory manager only **arms** the alarm when there are no workers on the floor.
- When the bank vault is closed, the manager must always **arm** the vault alarm.

## 10. to turn off

This phrasal verb is the opposite of “to turn on” and means to deactivate an alarm.

- When I arrive at work in the morning, the first thing that I do is **turn off** the alarm.

## 11. to disarm

This verb is a synonym of “to turn off”, but it is more formal or technical.

- The factory manager **disarms** the alarm when he arrives at the factory every morning.
- In order to open the bank vault, the manager must first **disarm** the vault alarm.

## 12. to reset

This means to restore the original (or previous) configuration of an alarm, or to arm it again.

- Every time my dog sets off the alarm, I have to **reset** it.

## Nouns

- alarm
- alarm clock
- fire alarm
- car alarm
- PIN (Personal Identification Number)
- timer
- sensor
- detector

## Adjectives

- armed
- disarmed
- tripped
- triggered
- sensitive

Online alarm clock: <https://vclock.com/>

Complete alarm glossary: <https://www.abus.com/eng/Guide/Security-glossary/Alarm-systems>