

MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT BURGLAR ALARM WEB PAGE

Welcome to the City of Milwaukee Burglar Alarm web page. This site is intended to provide information regarding Milwaukee's Burglar Alarm policy including ordinance changes or updates, procedural changes, frequently asked questions, and scam alerts.

On September 19, 2004, the Verified Response Policy to burglar alarms was implemented by the Milwaukee Police Department. This means that the Police Department no longer responds to burglar alarms that are not first verified by a private first responder. Public Safety Ordinance #105-75-14(g) **requires alarm businesses** to provide a private first responder service to respond to all burglar alarm activations. If the alarm responder determines that a crime or attempted crime has occurred at the alarmed premise, the **responder** will call for police response from a secure location. The complete Public Safety ordinance pertaining to burglar alarms may be viewed online at www.milwaukee.gov. From this home page, click on the following links:

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- City Ordinances
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Frequently asked questions:

What is a private first responder? Who will be responding to my residence/business?

A private first responder is a security service or guard company contracted by your selected alarm company to respond to your burglar alarm activation. The alarm company that you select should be able to tell you the name, location and phone number of the private first responder service that will be responding to your alarmed premise.

As public safety is most important, citizens should **not** respond to an activated burglar alarm until after the first responder service has determined the alarm to be false, or in the case of a verified burglar alarm, stand by in a safe location until the police secure the scene.

What do I need to know before selecting an alarm business to meet my security needs?

- Alarm companies are required to obtain an Alarm Business License before operating as an alarm business in the City of Milwaukee. Milwaukee does not respond to unlicensed alarm companies or non-verified burglar alarms. There are over 100 licensed alarm businesses currently operating in Milwaukee. To check whether an alarm business has obtained the proper license, visit the city website at www.milwaukee.gov/license. From this site, click on "Search by address or business name for license issued." In the space provided, enter the name of the alarm company.
- Determine the following:
 1. Where is the alarm business located?
 2. Is it a local business or is the company located out of state?
 3. Who will service the equipment if it needs to be repaired or replaced?
 4. Where is the service office located and how can they be reached?
 5. What is the monitoring fee?

An additional source of information regarding alarm companies and scam alerts can be found at www.consumerreports.org. At the search site, type in "Home Security."

In the case of door-to-door neighborhood canvassing by various alarm companies, be wary of the promise of a “free” security system and long-term contracts. Before signing a contract, read it carefully or have a relative or friend review it with you. Do not be rushed or pressured into signing a contract.

To verify information given to you by a door-to-door alarm company sales representative, you may contact the Milwaukee Police Department Alarm Office at 414-935-7167.

The Milwaukee Police Department does not respond to panic alarms. Panic alarms are illegal in the City of Milwaukee.

How can I locate an alarm / security company to install a security system?

The yellow pages listing under “Security” provides several names of security companies to investigate. A check with the Better Business Bureau may provide additional information regarding complaint history, customer satisfaction, and the length of time a business has been in operation.

What is the difference between an alarm company and an alarm monitoring company?

An alarm company is the company that sells and installs the security system. Most alarm companies contract with a separate alarm **monitoring** service, whose sole responsibility is to monitor the alarm activation at your residence/business. It is important to know the name and phone number of the alarm monitoring company that will be monitoring your burglar alarm. This will enable you to contact the monitoring company and ask them to explain their procedure when handling alarm activation from your residence/ business. If the monitoring company’s reply is not in accordance with Milwaukee’s Public Safety ordinance and/or Verified Response policy, you may want to keep shopping.

How do I know what type of alarm to have installed?

All premises, business or residential have various security needs. After selecting an alarm company, the representative of the company should be able to customize a security system for your particular needs.

How many false alarms are allowed before receiving a citation?

An alarmed premise requiring police response to three (3) or more **false** alarms within a calendar year is subject to receiving a citation.

Alarm companies should not be contacting the homeowner or resident to respond to alarm activations.

Armed with this information, you should be able to make an informed decision when selecting a security system for your home or business.