Law Enforcement Outreach Sponsored by:

Materials Researched and Prepared by:
Security Industry Alarm Coalition

SIAC
Security Industry Alarm Coalition

Program Goals

Encourage local industry professionals to engage their local law enforcement leaders.

Promote open communication between the industry, the alarm public and law enforcement.

Promote best practices to address the issue of excessive dispatch requests.

- Ordinance Task Force
- Model Ordinance
- Enhanced Call Verification (ECV)
- CP-01 Control Panel Standard
- Third Party Administration

Develop a local alarm policy or ordinance implementing these “Best Practices”.

Maintain the relationship moving forward.

OVERVIEW:

It is common knowledge by both the alarm industry and the general public that for security systems to be fully effective there needs to be a response by a well trained, professional law enforcement officer. Yet all too often we are the last to know when a law enforcement agency has made a decision to adopt by legislation or policy a restrictive response to our security systems.

In every community where the legislative body has formed a working group; made up of law enforcement, citizens (both alarm owners and non alarm owners alike) and the alarm industry to study public response to alarms the overwhelming decision has been to continue response, and to legislate fees and fines on abusers, not the entire alarm public.

It doesn't take much investigation to realize there is a communication breakdown between the law enforcement, the alarm industry and the alarm users. Therefore it isn't much of a leap to determine that the responsibility to fix this breakdown falls squarely on the shoulders of the alarm industry as we are the common link between the citizens and the police. By default we have become the voice of the alarm users who are our customers

The purpose of this document is to establish a process where we will systematically work to open communication between local, top level law enforcement officials and the alarm industry. While this first attempt will make every effort to define the best methodology to accomplish these goals it is better to look upon this as a strategy, not a final plan. We should always keep in mind the need to be flexible and to adapt as we move forward with this very important process.

As you review this document you must keep in mind that this process will require a commitment by many individuals and that the success of the program will rely on duplicating our successes and learning from our failures. Therefore it will require open communication between all participants if we are to achieve success.

Finally, in order to be effective in this mission we must first understand the "*what and the why*" of the perception of all parties of the services that we provide. Without this knowledge we can not expect to convince anyone to be receptive of the value of our services.

INTRODUCTION:

Why do we need to have direct and open communication with law enforcement?

In the markets where law enforcement has proposed a restrictive response position there are some key points that we have had to be able to defend. We say defend because since traditionally we are not proactive with both the police and the media the true value of our services is never heard. In fact we dare to say that most leaders in the industry can't even effectively respond to these points.

It is not the intent of this program for your contact with law enforcement to be adversarial. With that said, it is incumbent upon you to be informed on the issues that will inevitably be raised, and since most law enforcement agencies have at least heard about non response it only makes sense that these same points will eventually need to be answered in any communication we have.

These following points are critical as they are the issues that you will have to be able to effectively respond to.

- Alarm calls are 98% false.
- A small percentage of the community is receiving a disproportionate level of service.
- By restricting response we will be able to save *"X"* man hours which we will be able to redirect to other missions.
- Responding to alarm calls takes officers away from other more important calls.
- A first response by a third party will not have a negative impact on the public.
- Alarm calls represent over 20% of the police call load.
- Alarm calls rarely result in an apprehension.

As you work your way through this document we will address these points with factual information that will allow you to effectively and accurately respond if any of these issues are raised. At the same time having knowledge of these answers and making your entire staff knowledgeable will help you inform your customers, make you a more effective manager and may even help you run your business.

Informed Responses to Common Criticisms of the Alarm Industry

A. Alarm calls are 98% false.

In fact, using the same criteria used to judge the effectiveness of alarm systems the vast majority of all calls for public response could be determined to be false. At the same time a security system is not designed with apprehension in mind. If you look at the role of the alarm system you may get a better feel for what the value of electronic protection actually is.

Traditionally alarm systems have been designed to perform four basic functions.

#1- Alarm systems are designed to deter an event from happening. This value has been documented in many studies, the most recent of which is the "Rutgers Study". In this document the location of every registered alarm system and every burglary were tracked over a five year period in the City of Newark NJ. The report proved that alarm systems are an extremely effective deterrent, not only to the alarm site, but also to surrounding homes and businesses. The higher concentration of alarm systems the further out that deterrence extends. This report is available at www.airef.org.

#2- When alarm systems fail to deter an event they are designed to warn the occupants that an event is occurring. This same audible notification serves to put the intruder on notice that an alarm has been tripped thus causing a higher level of fear that they may be apprehended.

#3- If the attack continues the system is designed to minimize the risk to lives and property. In interviews with burglars they have stated they don't typically break into properties with alarm systems, but if they do they only stay in the premises for less than three minutes.

#4- The final design function is to summon assistance, in preference a well trained, sworn law enforcement official.

Occasionally intrusion alarms are silent and when they are the capture rate is much higher. However, this means that the system was not designed to fulfill the first three functions of deter, warn and minimize loss. It would be much harder to convince a homeowner to install a silent alarm as they are far more concerned about the first three functions than the last. Even business owners are better served when these basic functions are in place.

The alarm industry has never claimed that we intend for our systems to act as a tool to capture criminals and while there is a constant advancement in technology it is doubtful that our basic goals will change. In fact, the most that would come from this advancement may be the use of video to document the event with the potential to assist the authorities in the future apprehension of the perpetrator.

B. A small and elite percentage of the community is receiving a disproportionate level of service.

In fact, virtually every member of the community is impacted by security systems every single day. From schools, churches, municipal buildings, grocery stores and banks to homes it is difficult to ignore the deterrence that alarm systems provide. Most insurance companies either require security systems or offer discounts when they are purchased.

Municipal services are not typically metered. If these services were to be billed by usage then alarm users would pay the lowest fees as the average residential system has only one request for response every three to five years and commercial users only an average of twice a year. Besides, can you imagine a world where every time you use a park or library, drive on a public road or use any public provided service there would be an individual invoice? There are certain core services that the public expects to be covered by taxes and key to this would be police and fire services.

The very nature of providing a safe community requires that higher crime areas receive higher levels of police service. This is expected, yet these same areas typically pay the lowest taxes but if you asked any citizen they would agree with this tactic.

The alarm industry has a 20% market penetration in the residential market and well over 50% on the commercial side. Yet alarm calls use less than two percent of the manpower that would include the task of responding alarms!

The Los Angeles Burglar Alarm Task Force reported that alarm systems were spread across the entire socio-economic strata of the community, directly disputing the misconception that alarm users represented an elite part of the community. There was additional testimony from law enforcement officials that the cessation of alarm response would deliver no savings in time or dollars.

Finally, in every community where the data is available, the number one category of alarm abusers are municipal buildings. In fact in one community, after enforcing an alarm ordinance for one year, reported that 60% of all responses were to this occupancy classification yet they represent the smallest percentage of all alarm systems. By order of abusers of police dispatches it was found that the following hierarchy is the rule not the exception:

#1. Municipal Buildings, most often schools
#2. Churches
#3. Banks
#4. Large retail users such as department stores
#5. Other occupancies with multiple users
#6. Residential and small retail

In spite of the overwhelming abuse by municipal buildings many jurisdictions have given immunity to the occupancies from alarm ordinance provisions, yet their totals are incorporated in the total dispatches responded to.

C. By restricting response we will be able to save *"X"* man hours which we will be able to redirect to other missions.

If one were to query the public on their perception of what the police do they would most likely respond that they are either in uniform or are detectives. In fact in an evolving world the police mission has expanded and many police agencies dedicate less than 50% of their resources in the uniform role. To be completely fair, staffing levels have accounted for this as most agencies have added personnel over the years to compensate for this expanding role. This is important because these are the officers that would be tasked to respond to alarms.

The role of uniform officers requires that assignments must cover the entire geography, the entire clock and the entire calendar equally. Since alarm response calls only use an average of 2% of these resources, and since this demand is spread across the entire geography and clock there is absolutely no savings that will be achieved that can be directed to any other assignment.

D. Responding to alarm calls takes officers away from other more important calls.

The alarm industry acknowledges that alarm response takes up manpower, but in fact most agencies have lowered the priority of response to audible alarms to a point where very few calls have a lower priority. The alarm industry further acknowledges that while it would be beneficial to the citizens that response is as fast as possible, the true value of an alarm system is its deterrence value and this deterrence remains when there is the threat of a response by a well trained professional law enforcement officer. The industry contends that this same level of deterrence does not exist when response comes from the private sector and that private response is not even available in many communities.

When effective ordinances are put in place and enforced, the requests for alarm response can be reduced by 80%. When you combine these reductions with the potential revenue stream of these ordinances the entire problem becomes not only manageable but revenue neutral.

E. A first response by a third party will not have a negative impact on the public.

History has shown that while police almost always send two officers to alarm responses, if the police response is removed, more often than not it will be the alarm owner who becomes the first responder. In Dallas Texas after enforcing a non response policy on commercial alarms there were numerous reports of citizens responding to their own alarms, and in several cases firearms came into play. After only one year these restrictions were removed.

Having citizens responding to alarms not only places them in harms way, it also places law enforcement and the public in a potentially dangerous position. Citizens responding will inevitably come down in many cases to armed citizens responding. A law enforcement officer or an innocent bystander becomes a potential target for an armed and scared citizen responding to their own alarms.

Most states don't have any required training of private guards and most private guards aren't even allowed to be armed. This is not a deterrent.

F. Requests for alarm response represent over 20% of the total call load.

There is an old saying at MIT that says "*massage the data until it confesses*".

Depending on the community, dispatch requests originating from the alarm industry can actually represent as high as 25% of the total incoming call load in a 9-1-1 center. **This should not be confused with 25% of the resources used to respond to those calls**. A 9-1-1 center will have a handful of call takers while there are many more officers engaged in the actual response task, thus the more important number is the percentage of manpower used to respond to these calls and we've already established this as an average of 2 percent.

G. Alarm calls rarely result in an apprehension.

This is actually very true, but we've established that our systems have never been intended as a capture tool. However, even the police acknowledge that alarms are an effective deterrent to property related crimes.

Over the years many studies have attempted to establish this actual deterrence value and have reported that locations with alarms are as high as 16 times less likely to be victimized as those without security systems. Furthermore, when an alarmed property is attacked the value of the loss is minimal when compared to properties without alarms.

When Sparks Nevada Police investigated restricting response to alarms reported that in spite of the fact that .20% of all residences and .50% of all non residential locations had alarm systems they only represented .03% of those that were attacked.

Reading and familiarizing yourselves with this information is a key to opening effective dialogue with law enforcement. In fact, we don't recommend that anyone meet with law enforcement unless you are familiar and can conduct meaningful dialogue on these points.

To assist you in your meetings there is a briefing document in Appendix A that can easily and quickly be individualized to the agency that you are meeting with. We suggest that you read, become familiar with and use this document as well.

THE PROGRAM:

Being proactive with your local law enforcement agency opens many doors and there should be no negative consequences from this process. In fact, if all that you learn is that your local jurisdiction is intending to move toward non response, this is probably knowledge you didn't have before hand.

So how do I initiate contact with law enforcement?

Since this is being addressed by the association it would probably make it much easier if you first engaged the local police chief's and or sheriff's association. Having a relationship with the association can help open the door to a reluctant official.

In larger police agencies it may be unlikely that you will be able to make a one on one appointment with the chief in the beginning. As an alternative if you will identify who is in charge of the Patrol Division they are the next most effective commander to meet with.

Never discount the power of being involved in the same groups that officials are involved with. Of the various groups in any city probably the most effective would the local Chamber of Commerce. I have never seen a local Chamber that didn't have as members the entire elected body as well as key department heads within a City. In some areas one Chamber Chapter may include several smaller cities and or the unincorporated areas. In addition to having an opportunity to speak directly to official's, chamber membership has the added benefit as being a great place to prospect for new customers.

If you've ever read the book "Five Degrees of Separation" you'll know that with a little bit of checking you may know someone who knows the police chief or sheriff and who may assist you with getting a face to face meeting.

All law enforcement agencies honor their top officers monthly and annually. I would encourage your association to help sponsor this awards process. An example comes to us from Tennessee where the TBFAA sponsors an award for the top police chief every year where they give a special edition firearm. After just a few years this award is now a coveted recognition and has become very competitive among active top law enforcement officers throughout the state.

SIAC has been successful in 14 states organizing alarm management committees within the state chief's associations; the concept being that chief's aren't likely to sit on our committees but have welcomed the opportunity for us to sit on their committees. Again this is just a process of opening doors. What you are able to accomplish will be directly proportionate to the effort exerted.

A final suggestion is to use your existing scholarship program to initiate contact with officials. I'm certain that most law enforcement executives would welcome the opportunity to inform their personnel about the scholarship program.

APPENDIX

Supporting Documents	Page
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IACP Resolution "Video Verification and Alarm Dispatch Reduction"	A9- A10
Rutgers Study Executive Summary "The Impact of Home Burglar Alarm Systems on Residential Burglaries"	A11- A12

Additional Resources; *United States*

Central Station Alarm Association (CSAA)
www.csaaul.org

National Burglar and Alarm Association (NBFAA)
www.alarm.org

Security Industry Association (SIA)
www.siaonline.org

Security Industry Alarm Coalition (SIAC)
www.siacinc.org

Alarm Industry Research and Education Foundation (AIREF)
www.airef.org

Additional Resources; *Canada*

Canadian Security Association (CANASA)
www.canasa.org

An Executive Briefing for the *(Insert Jurisdiction Name Here)*

Materials Researched and Prepared by: Security Industry Alarm Coalition

13173 NW 19 Street
Pembroke Pines, FL 33028
Phone: 954-431-4552
ron@siacinc.org

(Insert Date)

The Security Industry Alarm Coalition represents the four North American trade associations on matters involving false dispatches, alarm ordinances and interfacing with law enforcement groups such as the International Association of Chief's of Police, the False Alarm Reduction Association and the National Sheriff's Association. We are also a Strategic Partner with the ICMA – International City Managers Association.

Additionally, SIAC participates in the standards writing and editing process for the alarm industry, as well as conducting numerous educational events for both the alarm industry and law enforcement.

The information contained in this briefing document reflects the vast combined experience of both the alarm industry and our law enforcement partners in the alarm ordinance process and contains recommendations that have been proven over time to be the most effective in creating effective dispatch reduction programs and legislation.

From experience, we know and can demonstrate that effective programs will significantly reduce dispatches and have the potential to be completely revenue neutral to the ***(insert jurisdiction name here)***. In fact, depending on the level of reduction activity in a community prior to passing or amending an ordinance, reductions of up to 80% have been achieved in the first year as well as maintained over time.

SIAC is prepared to offer our assistance at no cost to the ***(insert jurisdiction name here).*** The level of our involvement can be as little as providing background and research to actually drafting an ordinance for the group to edit and consider.

In closing we highly endorse a public/ private process be employed in ***(insert jurisdiction name here)*** and salute the city for investigating all potential solutions.

Sincerely,

Ronald Walters

Ronald Walters, Director

Industry Position:

It is safe to say that throughout history, anytime people have congregated in an area to establish a community, one of the first issues addressed communally is public safety. Having a designated law enforcement officer sent a message to would-be criminals to take their activities to a different community.

In more recent history the traditional role of law enforcement has been expanded and the population spreading to suburban locations has taxed law enforcements limited resources. To counter this has been the expanded use of alarm systems to provide an additional layer of deterrence, or "first line of defense" but *for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction,* and in the case of alarm systems this has meant a drain on law enforcement assets.

It is universally acknowledged that burglar alarm systems are an important deterrence to property related crimes. Alarm systems provide an important deterrent to burglary; in fact some studies have shown that when an alarm is present that an alarmed premises is up to 16 times less likely to be the victim of a burglary. Nationally there is a small group within the municipal community that feels that sworn response to a private alarm is not within the scope of the police mission. On the other hand, both citizens and the alarm industry counter that 90% of all alarm users have an average of one response every three to four years. When an effective and well-enforced ordinance is enacted, this average can improve to once every 5 years. [1] When polled, citizens, both alarm system owners and those who don't own a system, have indicated they feel that police response is something that falls within the scope of core municipal services and the denial of those services is a violation of the public safety trust between the voters and their elected officials.[2]

The alarm industry acknowledges that many years ago there was an initial lag in our response to this issue. However, over the last 15 years the alarm industry, in cooperation with law enforcement, has addressed unnecessary alarm dispatches. Through various studies and working groups, the actual causes of these dispatches have been identified and solutions both short-, mid- and long-term have been developed. A vital part of this process has been the use of what are commonly referred to as "**False Alarm Ordinances**".

The alarm industry acknowledges its responsibility to solving this issue and commits the full resources of SIAC to finding a solution that will satisfy the citizens and officials. This document will attempt to address these issues in a solution-based format with the hope that the affected parties can reach an agreement on how best to move forward.

[1] SDM Magazine, 2008; The Truth About False Alarms
[2] Bisconti Survey, 2006; Salt Lake City Citizens Survey

On Enforcement:

When an alarm ordinance fails, it is typically for a couple of key reasons.

The most common reason is a lack of enforcement.

Another frequent cause of failure is the inability on the part of the alarm administrator to collect the monies due. This is especially a problem when the police are charged with administering an ordinance. It is not something they are trained to do; *therefore we should not be surprised when they experience difficulty in performing this mission.* An ordinance with low collection rates is unlikely to succeed, and failure only brings a potentially good ordinance down before it has an opportunity to take effect.

Most recently, many jurisdictions have chosen to contract with a third party that specializes in the administration of alarm ordinances. There are several of these companies around the country that provide different levels of administration[3]. The actual costs to the city will vary depending upon the services provided but in all cases there should be dollars returned to the jurisdiction and the monies paid for this administration are typically less than would be the costs to administer in-house.

The benefits of using a third party are:[4]

- ◊ The city can budget on the level of income that will be available.
- ◊ Third party companies have better collection rates, typically over 90%.
- ◊ The protection of proprietary customer information from public disclosure is a non-issue if the information is in the hands of a private company. (Any ordinance should still exempt this information from public disclosure.)
- ◊ Since these companies are experienced in ordinance administration, the start-up is faster and more successful.
- ◊ The revenue can be set to come directly to the city and then paid to the third party vendor. This makes the revenue-reporting compliance issue easier for the city as there is no need to continuously audit the subcontractor's records.

[3] SIAC 2008; Partial List of 3rd Party Administration Company's
[4] Olympia Washington 2007; First year results of Ordinance Enforcement

On Escalating and Meaningful Fines:

Early ordinances allowed for a high number of "Free" responses before any elements such as fining or suspension of response kicked in. Subsequently we have learned that it is actually a small percentage of the alarm users who cause the problem and that extending the number of "Free" responses beyond 1 or 2 only delays reaching the same abusive alarm system owners that you eventually end up fining anyway.

Furthermore, history has shown that when fines don't escalate in a significant fashion, business owners tend to just budget for them. Therefore, fines should escalate as offenses continue, so that the alarm system owner is motivated to correct the problem.

On Suspension of Response to Abusers:

Since a small percentage of alarm users are causing the vast majority of the responses, it makes sense that at some point continued response, with or without fines, is counterproductive.

Historically, the largest abusers by occupancy type are schools, municipal buildings, churches, banks and large retailers. Small privately held commercial establishments, as a general rule, are no worse than residential locations. While occasionally you may find a few residences or small businesses in the abuser category, it is the exception not the rule.

Ultimately the decision on when to suspend response falls to the individual communities, and it varies based on local demographic and economic factors. While some communities may elect for a very low number prior to suspension, others have decided to go as high as 12. You may want to consider two different points of suspension for residential and large commercial and to offset this through two permit structures**. Suspending response to chronic abusers WILL reduce dispatches significantly in the first year.**

Exemptions: Many ordinances will exempt public locations, this is not recommended. If permitted, then the responses to these locations should not be considered when determining alarm response rates.

On Enhanced Call Verification (ECV):

As a direct response to a request from law enforcement, the alarm industry identified, investigated and implemented a process that is known as ECV or Enhanced Call Verification. [5] ECV is endorsed by the Nationals Sheriff's Association (NSA), the International Association of Chief's of Police (IACP) and the False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA).

For the last 20 years, the alarm industry has universally made one verification phone call to the alarm premises prior to dispatching the authorities. When this call is made, over 75% of the potential dispatches are stopped at the monitoring facility. The remaining 25% of the signals represent the total of the calls being dispatched.

ECV means a second call is made to a different number other than the premises, preferably the alarm system owner's cellular phone. Initial studies show that when the second call is made, over half of the remaining potential dispatches are eliminated. This represents a 50% reduction in the dispatches seen by the police. Two additional benefits are a reduction in the incoming call activity in the 9-1-1 center, as well as a decrease in response times to low priority calls.

ECV is easily deployed and requires little effort from the industry or the alarm users to implement. Though many companies have voluntarily implemented ECV for most of their customers it is necessary to include the requirement within the ordinance to overcome old contractual requirements or reluctant citizens that believe an immediate dispatch is necessary.

On CP-01 Approved Control Panels:

ECV applies a treatment to the symptoms of false dispatches. To enhance this and to provide a long-term cure to the problem, the alarm industry developed the ANSI/SIA CP-01 Control Panel Standard. [6]

CP-01 alarm equipment was developed to deal specifically with the high incidence of user error. CP-01 addresses the most common mistakes made by users, and should be a requirement of any legislation. It should be noted that any equipment-based solutions should not be applied to legacy systems. Instead, the ordinance should require that all new systems and service replacements should be required to install CP-01-Listed panels. CP-01 can also be applied to abuser systems that have had response suspended due to excessive dispatches. Prior to a reinstatement of response, the existing equipment should be replaced with CP-01 listed panels.

[5] ANSI/ CSAA ECV Standard
[6] ANSI/ SIA CP-01 2002; Control Panel Standard (SIAC Summary)

Some key areas addressed by the CP-01 Standard are:

- ◊ Entry and Exit Delay Periods
- ◊ Low Battery Conditions (a large cause of severe weather alarm trips)
- ◊ Panic Devices
- ◊ Communication Delays

After several years of field testing companies that have voluntarily used the CP-01 Listed Control Panels report they are generating 40% fewer signals. Fewer signals equates to fewer dispatches.

Equipment-Based Solutions:

It is tempting to consider technology as a quick fix to the dispatch problem and there is without doubt a place for these technological solutions. However, applying technology uniformly to all existing systems becomes a form of non-response as most existing equipment does not always easily interface with new technology. Thus, any equipment-based solution should be applied to all new installations, all service replacements and to abusive accounts with high dispatch rates.

Applying equipment-based solutions, such as video verification, multiple alarm trips on different zones or audio listen-in, will not produce significant results.[7] These solutions should instead be considered as additional methods of verification and applied to problem systems or special applications or environments where additional information will assist in the decision-making process.

[7] SIAC 2008; White Paper on Video Verification

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The Full Story of Telephone Verification

Starting in the late 80's the security alarm industry began a process of telephone verification prior to requesting a dispatch from the authorities. As this program matured through the 1990's the monitoring arm of the industry was screening 75% of all intrusion alarms prior to contacting law enforcement.

As the industry grew in the number of systems, and in spite of this 75% screening, it became obvious that something that could deliver more reductions had to be developed. At this point the industry and police began the process of developing legislation that would fine abusers of the process, yet this still failed to deliver significant additional reductions so for a decade we continued to dispatch on roughly 25% of the incoming calls.

In the weeks after the 9-11 attacks the International Association of Chief's of Police, through their Private Sector Liaison Committee, challenged the industry to find a solution that did not require enforcing an ordinance.

A small group of industry professionals met to determine what could be done and if the industry could actually accomplish this daunting challenge. The group looked at everything that was being done and what was the most effective.

Since 75% of ALL false alarms were the result of user error, and since for there to be user error the user had to be at the premises, why were we unable to reach more of these people? After looking at all of the possible causes it was determined that at the top of the list was the "call waiting" feature on many telephone lines, primarily residential phone lines.

When the alarm system dials out and the monitoring company was attempting telephone verification, if the system still has control of the phone line the central station personnel will hear a ringing phone on the other end, while in actuality the alarm panel still has the phone line. After running tests it was learned that when no verification was made on the first call, by calling the same number a second time in 25% of the cases contact was made on the second call.

When this is expanded to include cellular phone numbers over 50% of the previously unverified calls were successfully verified on the second call. This process went on to become an industry standard and is now commonly referred to as Enhanced Call Verification, or ECV.

Police agencies not wanting to adopt and enforce and ordinance can require this by policy and achieve significant reductions.
Currently the Association of Police Communications Officials is considering ECV as a standard for law enforcement communications centers. If this is successful then no other action will be required in order to reap the full benefit of ECV.

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Video Monitoring and Alarm Dispatch Reduction

INTRODUCTION:

Over the last decade the use of video equipment has had a huge impact on society as well as the electronic security industry. From the London Subway bombers to the seemingly daily robbery events documented by video equipment it is clear that the use of video has earned a permanent place in the overall scope of electronic security. In fact both law enforcement and the public have almost come to expect video documentation of every event and crime and while video has many viable applications it is not the complete solution to reducing alarm dispatches. This document will explore the very narrow scope of *video monitoring* as one of many tools to reduce dispatch requests to burglar alarm systems.

ISSUE:

The issue of alarm dispatch requests continues to be a national concern for the law enforcement community. In spite of the fact that over 75% of all dispatch requests are the result of user error, it is the responsibility of the public and private sectors to explore every possible reduction method and examine the viability of all technologies and procedures. Recently a handful of law enforcement agencies have considered the use of remotely monitored video as a requirement to elicit response to a burglar alarm signal.

This document will detail why this technology is not well suited at this time to provide any measurable or effective results in dispatch reduction when applied globally and therefore should not be required in an alarm ordinance as a prerequisite for a dispatch.

AUTHORITY:

The IACP – Private Sector Liaison Committee comprised of seasoned members of both law enforcement and the alarm industry have for years studied the effectiveness of alarm reductions methods and programs. The diversity of PSLC members allows for input and review from nearly all aspects of the public and private sectors, yielding a balanced and effective perspective on alarm dispatch reduction.

Why not video monitoring as a global solution?

1. **Criminal Intent/Activity –** Law Enforcement agencies would prefer to know there is actual criminal activity taking place prior to committing resources, some believe this should be a prerequisite for an alarm dispatch. If these transmitted images do not show an obvious criminal event in progress the standard verification process of calling the premises and authorized key holders must still be undertaken.

   Simply stated, the fact that there is a person on the video screen does not establish criminal intent or activity, it is common for authorized users to be on site, regardless of the state of the alarm system – sometimes they just forget to turn the alarm system off.

   Video monitoring typically transmits a series of still pictures or a short burst of video frames to an offsite monitoring provider. With over 75% of all alarm events being the result of user error these events will rarely be resolved solely by a few images viewed by alarm monitoring personnel at an off site location.

2. **Camera Placement/Standards -** There is no standard on how much equipment constitutes an effective video monitoring system. While a single camera may be adequate for a small one-room retail location, there are locations with multiple rooms, or many thousands of square feet of warehouse or office space which would require substantial camera placement. Should each point of perimeter and interior protection on a security alarm system also be covered by a camera, and exactly what will be learned by having a camera in each of these locations?

   The same applies to residential applications – one or two cameras in common areas or one in every perimeter room which would include bedrooms? Unlikely! Yet a requirement for "video verification" before dispatch might require such placement. It is not unusual for a burglar to break into a master bedroom and exit quickly without roaming the entire home. A one or two camera placement may not guarantee a picture confirming an intruder or criminal activity.

3. **Cost: Citizens/Users -** Video equipment steadily decreases in cost and increases in dependability, however there remains additional expenses to install, monitor and service video monitoring systems that is above the cost incurred installing an alarm system. Recognizing that 90% of the active systems are not part of the alarm dispatch problem, requiring all systems to be upgraded to include the video monitoring component places an unnecessary financial burden on all but the wealthiest alarm users, especially since the technology continues to evolve and better equipment will continue to be developed.

   If law enforcement is led to believe that video verification is a solution to the dispatch issue and we in turn require this additional technology in order to elicit a response, the legacy of millions of existing systems without the video monitoring technology may be required to comply even though they may not be a part of the problem.

4. **Monitoring Centers Standards:** Technologically speaking there is no standard that the video monitoring facility can rely upon to cover all systems. In fact, virtually each manufacturer has unique and proprietary requirements in order to deploy any single manufacturer's product. Additionally, there are no standards or industry procedures/guidelines for operators to interpret video signals they receive. Resolution/image issues can make decisions on determining unauthorized intrusions or criminal activity very difficult to ascertain.

5. **Legal/Privacy Concerns:** Unlike many countries, the United States has right to privacy issues that must be recognized prior to giving a green light to any technology that may violate this very basic right. Recently in Richmond, California the American Civil Liberties Union challenged the use of video monitoring in high crime areas based solely on this right to privacy. While it is not anticipated that the ACLU will prevail in this effort it does bring up interesting issues as to the privacy issue. Even in London, England the city with the most aggressive video monitoring program in the world, they have had to address this concern through the use of elaborate software that prevents those controlling video cameras in public places from peering into private spaces.

CONCLUSION:

While there are a multitude of positive applications for video surveillance, and though it may be useful in selective alarm system accounts, it is not effective enough in most scenarios at this time to use as a global dispatch reduction tool, and not recommended as a requirement for police dispatch.

As submitted and approved by the IACP-Private Sector Liaison Committee on the ____day of _____ 2008.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Impact of Home Burglar Alarm Systems on Residential Burglaries

By Seungmug (a.k.a. Zech) Lee, Ph.D.

FACULTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Professor Ronald V. Clarke, Ph.D., Rutgers University (*Chair)* Professor Marcus Felson, Ph.D., Rutgers University
Professor George L. Kelling, Ph.D., Rutgers University
Professor Robert D. McCrie, Ph.D., John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Private security in the United States has a long and rich history. Since 1851, when Alan Pinkerton founded what would become the Pinkerton Detective Agency, market provision of goods and services for private security has grown by 2006 to become a $150 billion per year industry. In 2004, there were more than 1.1 million private security guards in the United States and the ratio of private security employees to public law enforcement is reported to be 1.5 to 1. The market for alarm systems, sold by the private security industry, is about a $30 billion annually, growing at a compound annual rate of 7% - 8%.

Despite the substantial size of the private security industry, few scientifically rigorous studies have examined the effectiveness of crime control and prevention by the private security sector. In particular, the deterrent effect of burglar alarms and their impact on crime in residential areas has not been adequately researched. With this in mind, this study examined the impact of home burglar alarms on residential burglaries in Newark, New Jersey during 2001 to 2005. Specifically it examined: (1) the overall relationship between burglar alarms and residential burglaries over these years; (2) the relationships of burglar alarms and residential burglaries to

demographic, socio-economic, and housing character indicators; (3) the spatial relationship between burglar alarms and residential burglaries using autocorrelation and clustering methods; and (4) the possible consequences of burglar alarms in terms of displacement of residential burglaries or diffusion of benefits. Quantitative analyses answer the first two research questions, and spatial analyses answer the two remaining questions.

Prior research on the deterrent effect of home burglar alarm systems indicates that these do deter burglars, but there are many limitations to this work. For example, in most prior research, follow-ups are often short, reliable control groups are generally absent and there is little attention paid to displacement. This present study addresses these methodological issues by using alarm ownership as a denominator, employing advanced statistical tests, using 5 years' worth of data (2001 to 2005), and including the measurement of spatial displacement and diffusion of benefits.

Preliminary inspection of the data found a steady decrease in incidents of residential burglary and an increase in the number of registered burglar alarms during the period 2001 to 2005. The study reported in this dissertation seeks to understand and explain this relationship.

Primary data sources for the study were (1) residential burglar alarm permits records, (2) residential burglaries records, and (3) U.S. Census information. The census information used covered demographic, socio-economic, and housing characteristics indicators for the 90 census tracts in Newark, N.J.

The analyses proceeded as follows:

1. The addresses for burglar alarm permits and residential burglaries were geo-coded to permit spatial analyses.

2. Chi-square, bivariate and multivariate statistics were used to examine the overall and correlated relationships between burglar alarms and residential burglaries.

3. Advanced multiple regression techniques (e.g., forward selection and hierarchical regression statistics) were used to identify any significant relationships between the increase of burglar alarms in use and the decrease of residential burglary incidents over the multiple years.

4. Spatial analyses were conducted to examine the spatial distribution and relationship of both burglar alarms and residential burglaries and to verify earlier quantitative findings. Several methods were used for descriptive spatial analyses (e.g., point and density mappings) and for spatial impact analyses (e.g., spatial centrality and dispersion analyses and spatial autocorrelation and clustering analyses).

5. In order to study spatial displacement and diffusion of benefits, the recently developed Weighted Displacement Quotient (WDQ) approach with nested buffer and control zones was used, with some modifications made necessary by using a single lot (or land parcel) as the unit of analysis.

Several key indicators explained both the pattern of installed residential burglar alarms (e.g., black population, population ages 12 to 17, unemployment rate, and owner occupancy) and the pattern of residential burglaries (e.g., population ages under 17 and 25 to 34, unemployment, and householder ages 60 to 64). The

increase of burglar alarms did appear to explain the decrease of residential burglaries once the effect of all other independent had been taken into account.

City-wide spatial analyses showed that, (1) dense concentrations of burglar alarms existed, (2) these concentrations were in considerable proximity, and (3) they were isolated from the hotspots of residential burglaries. Such a pattern was taken as evidence of "diffusion of benefits," suggesting that burglar alarms had a positive impact on the immediate neighborhood by decreasing residential burglaries.

Support for the finding of diffusion of benefits at more micro level was provided by the WDQ analysis. This showed that there was no indication of any spatial displacement of residential burglaries from protected houses to nearby houses and indeed that burglar alarms tended to provide protection to these other houses. In short, a burglar alarm, as a target-hardening measure of situational crime prevention, not only protects the home without displacing burglary to nearby houses, but, in fact, also provides these other houses with protection from burglars.

In conclusion, it was recognized that the results of this study concerning the benefits of burglar alarms need to be replicated in cities other than Newark. If the results hold up in other settings, the use of burglar alarms should be encouraged. One obstacle to their wider use is the high cost of these alarms: though initial and maintenance costs of alarm systems have been reduced, they are still too expensive for most lower-income residents. The possibility is discussed of encouraging alarm ownership through discounts from the security industry and reduced premiums from home insurers.

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