



InfoLink

Information for Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Professionals

FARA InfoLink October, 2013

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Thanks to Institute Sponsors!

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Symposium – Has Many Benefits!

By Katherine Rudover, Windsor Police Service, Ontario, Canada

Have you or perhaps your employer, ever questioned the benefits of attending a FARA Symposium? If so, I would like to share my perspective and personal experience with the hope of providing some insight into the wealth of knowledge and opportunity one gains by attending.

Norma Beaubien, one of FARA's founders, had the foresight to bring public safety professionals and the alarm industry together in order to exchange information and to effectively work with local governments in achieving successful false alarm reduction programs. The abundance of information FARA has collected, published and made available to its members along with the public is invaluable!

Each year the Conference Organizing Committee's goal is to provide an interesting, educational and meaningful experience for attendees, while providing valuable networking possibilities both during and after conference hours.

- In my opinion, there is no better opportunity to:
- Keep up to date with the security industry and ever changing technology
- Learn about modifications in legislation and government standards
- Be educated by valuable guest speakers
- Gain knowledge of new and creative problem solving skills
- Share and network with colleagues who have the same interest in false alarm reduction
- Benefit and enjoy the overall conference experience

At the end of each FARA Symposium, the Conference Committee requests feedback from attendees (whether positive or negative), in order to ascertain what worked or what didn't. The questionnaire invites attendees to make recommendations that will enhance future Symposiums.

Don't miss the opportunity to be a part of an international network of professionals who can - and do make a difference in false alarm reduction!

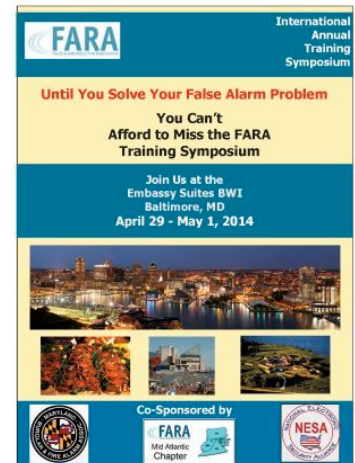
Program Set for 2014 Symposium

By: Brad Shipp

The Program is set for the 2014 Symposium at the Embassy Suites BWI hotel from April 28 to May 1, 2014.

[Download the full registration packet](#)

[Download the Reimbursement Application](#)



FARA's Believe it or Not

By: Brad Shipp, FARA

From Recent News headlines –

- **PA: Cops: Beer store burglars left trail of cans**
9.17.13 - The Citizens' Voice - Three area men are charged with breaking into a Pittston beer store early Tuesday morning and leaving behind a trail of beer cans, according to police. According to Pittston police, officers were dispatched to B & G Beverage about 2:15 a.m. Tuesday for an activated burglar alarm. [More Info](#)

- **MD: Serial Burglar Leaves Court Documents at Scene of Crime**

9.18.13 – Silver Spring Patch - Andre Antonio Henry—who burgled offices in Bethesda, Silver Spring and Rockville - was sentenced to 18 years in prison. One of the clues that helped detectives link Henry to the burglaries was paperwork from the Washington, DC, court system left behind at the scene of the Silver Spring burglary. [More Info](#)

- **CT: Dog triggers security alarm, saves owner's life**

9.28.13 – WFSB - woman from Oakdale said her 8-year-old German Shepherd saved her life this summer, when she was having a choking episode. "She's my girl," said ... [More Info](#)

- **NY: Sunlight Helped Ignite Fire in Law Office, Fire Marshal Says**

9.30.13 Patch.com - The smoldering papers caused the smoke detector in attorney Michael P. Malone's office to activate the building's fire alarm system, which notified the ... [More Info](#)

- **GA: School burglary suspect identified by arrest citation in pocket**

10.1.13 - WSB-TV 2 Atlanta - Atlanta police say they were able to identify a school burglary suspect because he had an arrest citation with his name on it for a burglary at another school in his pocket. Investigators said they were notified of the break-in when a silent alarm was activated at Scott Elementary School at 11:55 p.m. Monday. Officers said they could see a man on camera walking around from ... [More Info](#)

Do you have any stories you would like to share about stupid criminals or strange, unusual, or funny reasons for false alarms? How about outlandish things that happen in the course of your usual work day? I know we all have them, so let's share and give everyone a chuckle! Please forward your stories to news@faraonline.org and we'll put them in the next InfoLink for all to share!

CANASA Events

By: Gerry Miller, Peel Regional Police

CANASA has interesting events taking place in the next two months. For more info visit www.canasa.org

- Oct 22nd Monitoring Symposium (Guest Speakers)
- Oct 23rd – Oct 24rd Security Canada Central 2013 International Security Conference & Exposition
- Nov 7th – Ontario Chapter Member Meeting – Toronto (Toronto and Peel Regional Police)

The "Love/Hate" Relationship Between Cops And Their Dispatchers

By: PoliceOne 6/12/13

Let's be honest, there is no better example of a "love-hate relationship" than the daily interaction between street cops and their dispatchers. When things are going well, we love each other; when they're not, tempers flare, attitudes take a nosedive and we temporarily hate each other.

Having spent time on both sides of the dispatch center, I'd like to make just a few suggestions for making life easier—and safer—for each other.

Police Officers

Mind Your Manners

When you key up that microphone, be mindful of your tone of voice; if you wouldn't talk to your mother, your spouse, or your neighbor in that rude, sarcastic, exasperated tone, then why would you talk that way to your dispatcher?

This is where the "Golden Rule" becomes especially important. That call-taker is going to be your lifeline at some point, so talk to her in the same manner that you'd like her to talk back to you when you're under stress.

Most "911" centers are chaotic at best, and there are going to be times when you'll have to ask for information to be repeated, or you have to repeat your own transmission; after all, no system nor human is perfect. Take a deep breath and think before you speak.



(AP Photo/George Widman)

Try To Provide Some Closure

Dispatchers spend their shift responding to crisis after crisis, but they rarely get to hear or see the outcome of their actions. This is especially important in critical incidents.

A friend of mine, a veteran 911 operator, once took a call from a handicapped woman whose apartment was on fire. The dispatcher heroically talked to the victim, keeping her calm and eventually helping her make peace with what would turn out to be her last moments on Earth. Neither the police nor fire department were able to save this woman, and the incident was traumatic for all involved, especially when we discovered that the fire victim was a relative of a police employee.

A crisis intervention team was activated, and all involved employees *except for the dispatcher* were invited to participate. No one even told the dispatcher that the woman had died; she had to read about it the next day in the paper. This was a simple oversight on the agency's part, but it was devastating to that dispatcher.

Make sure that after the conclusion of each "hot" call (and even some of the funny ones) someone calls dispatch and lets them know the outcome. This gives the operators some much-needed closure, and helps make everyone feel a part of the same team.

Recognize the Stressful Nature of a Dispatcher's Job

As cops, we think *our* job is stressful, which it is, but we often fail to recognize the consistently high level of stress inside that com-center. Remember, no one calls "911" when things are going well, so every single communication coming in and going out of dispatch is some sort of crisis.

A good dispatcher is highly aware that they are responsible for the clear, safe communication between you and the unknown, but 8, 10 or 12 hours of that atmosphere can get to even the most Zen-like personality. A kind word, a "thank you," and the recognition that things can get pretty crazy, both on and off the street, can go a long way toward easing the stress in dispatch and improving dispatcher/cop relations. .

Dispatchers

Be Vigilant & Informed About Officer Safety & Survival

Since dispatchers are often the key to an officer's safe and successful outcome on calls, traffic stops, and other incidents, police dispatchers should study officer safety and survival tactics with all the enthusiasm of your average rookie cop.

Attend outside training courses (such as the Street Survival seminar), read law enforcement publications (both electronic and print), and stay abreast of officer survival news and information.

Call-takers should be allowed to ride along with FTO's and supervisors who are willing and able to provide the dispatcher with an appropriate overview of officer safety from a cop's eye view.

Get in the habit of seeking additional information for the officers before they ask for it, such as the previous incidents at the location you're sending them to, the criminal history of the person they currently have stopped, and any other special knowledge you may have that will help the officers stay safe.

Know Your Dispatch Area

In the age of computer-aided dispatch, in-car computers, GPS and other technology, operators tend to rely too heavily on the screen in front of them, not in their knowledge of the officers' coverage area. Get out in the car, go on ride-alongs, read the local crime bulletins, and spend time getting to know the streets, businesses, and hot spots of your jurisdiction.

Don't rely solely on the computer screen to recommend who should go where. Get in the habit of picturing the area where you're sending the officers, and then do what you can to make their response safer and more productive.

Recognize that you're here to support the cops

As a sergeant, one of the biggest complaints I hear from officers is "the dispatchers act like we're there to support them,

not the other way around.” This is an age-old workplace dilemma: “Whose job is more important.” Dispatchers, we’re going to ask you to do things, call people, and answer questions that may seem absolutely frivolous or absurd to you, but they are important to us.

I once had a dispatcher who seemed aggravated every time I asked her to call inside and have a bank employee step outside during our usual rash of morning false alarms. Rather than complain to her supervisor or start a verbal “war” over the radio, I contacted her and asked if she knew why we had the employees come out to us rather than the officers going into the bank.

As I suspected, it turned out that she had never been informed about the officer safety procedures in false alarm response. Once she understood, she became absolute vigilant in her response to these and other potentially dangerous calls, and she turned out to be a great dispatcher.

Dispatchers need to recognize that their role is to support the officer on the street, to inform them, keep track of them and help them stay safe. And, remember, the “Golden Rule” I talked about works both ways.

Supervisors and managers

Supervisors and managers on both sides need to be willing to step in and provide opportunities for learning, team building — and yes, even some constructive “venting.”

Like many workplace disagreements, the “us versus them” mentality often stems from simple misunderstandings. A veteran dispatcher can be one of a rookie officer’s best trainers if she is allowed to provide real-time feedback, and a veteran street cop can be invaluable to a new dispatcher who is trying to learn proper officer safety. Constantly remind yourself and each other — that we truly are all on the same team —and then get in the habit of treating all of your teammates with the same courtesy and respect that you expect them to bestow upon you. [More Info](#)

FBI releases crime statistics for 2012

9.19.13 - The Federal Bureau of Investigation

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reporting program collects information on crimes reported by law enforcement agencies regarding the violent crimes of murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault, as well as the property crimes of burglary, larceny theft, motor vehicle theft and arson.

[More Info](#)

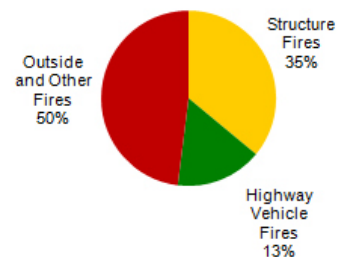
U.S. fire deaths reach a new all-time low

NFPA

According to NFPA's new Fire Loss in the U.S. during 2012 report, a fire department responds to a fire in the U.S. every 23 seconds.

The report, which tracks civilian deaths, injuries, property damage, and patterns by occupancy, region, and community size, also shows that two-thirds of fire department calls were EMS or rescue-type calls; four percent were to actual fires. [More Info](#)

Fires in the United States During 2012



News on Door to Door Sales

Courtesy of NESAs

- **ID: Better Business Bureau: Watch out for door-to-door sales scams**
9.19.13 - The Idaho Statesman - Fall’s harvests are coming in — venders are out hawking their fresh produce on street sides... [More Info](#)
- **TN: Security alarm scam reported in Houston County**
10.3.13 - The Leaf Chronicle - Houston County authorities are warning of a scam that has been reported in this week by residents who received calls from purported security alarm company. [More Info](#)

- **ADT Obtains Permanent Injunctions Against Vision Security and Security One for Deceptive Sales Practices**

10.10.13 - Business Wire via Yahoo! Finance - ADT settled its lawsuit against Florida-based Security Networks and its Utah-based affiliate Vision Security, requiring the companies to pay \$2.2 million in damages. The companies jointly market and sell systems to homeowners across the United States. [More Info](#)

- **Alarm salesman steals client's credit card**

10.10.13- WINK TV Southwest Florida - A woman signs up with an alarm company to protect her home and instead becomes a victim of identity theft. The salesman who came into her home to sign her up ended up paying his bill with her credit card. [More Info](#)

Public Safety Updates

Courtesy of NESAs

- **AZ: Surprise slates 2 more meetings for false alarm feedback**

9.16.13 - YourWestValley.com - Surprise is considering amendments to its false alarm ordinance, and the police department is conducting three public meetings about possible alternatives. [More Info](#)

- **GA: City of Atlanta False Alarm Ordinance Goes into Effect**

9.17.13 - Patch.com - According to the City, in 2012, the Atlanta Police Department responded to 65,000 alarm system activations, 95 percent of which were false alarms or alarms that ... [More Info](#)

- **LA: LCPD reports 65% false alarm rate**

10.14.13 - KPLC Lake Charles - They're hired to protect and serve the City of Lake Charles, but all too often, LCPD officers are chasing false alarms. As KPLC's Lee Peck reports, it's the number one call out and it's starting to become a real problem. [More Info](#)

- **MD: False Alarm Verification Back On The Table In Salisbury**

10.7.13 - WMDT Salisbury - Salisbury, Md - For the third time this year, a false alarm verification system is back up for discussion in Salisbury. In a work session Monday, the Salisbury City Council will discuss the program, which... [More Info](#)

- **MS: False alarms draining city resources**

10.12.13 - WLBT 3 Jackson - Police have to respond to every alarm call. The numbers though, show it's rarely the real deal. When the alarm sounds, cops put it on the priority list. [More Info](#)

- **NC: City to consider false alarm fees**

9.18.13 - The Wilson Times - Setting off fire and security alarms repeatedly in the city could come with a price if the Wilson City Council adopts an ordinance that establishes new fees. [More Info](#)

- **NC: Town could charge for false alarms**

9.22.13 - Durham Herald Sun - False burglar and fire alarms cost the town nearly \$200,000 last year. ... "Our intent is to encourage alarm users to properly maintain and service their systems to ... [More Info](#)

- **NC: Wilson, NC delays adopting false alarm fees**

10.3.13 - SecurityInfoWatch - An interest by public school officials to correct problems with security alarms at several schools led the Wilson City Council to wait ... [More Info](#)

- **NH: Fire alarm ordinance proposed in Londonderry, NH**

10.3.13 - SecurityInfoWatch - Londonderry - Firefighters hope to put a new town ordinance in place to cut down on the number of false alarms. Fire Chief ... [More Info](#)

- **NV: Ask Joe: Viewer billed \$200 for false burglar alarm**

9.24.13 - KRNV My News 4 - A viewer named Grant who I bumped into this weekend said his burglar alarm went off in the middle of the night recently. He called the Washoe County Sheriff ... [More Info](#)

- **NY: Ulster County lawmakers delay action on false-alarm law**

9.24.13 - Kingston Daily Freeman - Kingston, N.Y. - Ulster County lawmakers have decided to delay action on a proposed "false alarm reduction act" amid concerns that naming the Ulster County Sheriff's Office both the recipient of fine money and the agency designated to hear appeals from property owners accused of violating the law could pose a conflict of interest. [More Info](#)

- **PA: An alarming predicament**

10.9.13 - Philly.com - City gives resident grief over alarm system it says is unregistered. [More Info](#)

- **PA: Most alarms are false, draining police resources**
9.29.13 - Pocono Record - The burglar alarm system at the CVS in Effort is effective at drawing attention — sometimes just the wrong kind. It has alerted police when debris blows around ... [More Info](#)
- **TN: New Ordinance to Cut Down "False Alarm" Calls**
9.19.13 - WBBJ TV - Jackson, Tenn. - Those in Jackson with fire or burglary alarms should take notice of a new city ordinance. Starting on October 1, if a single alarm system sounds three false alarms, owners can now be fined \$25 under a city ordinance. [More Info](#)
- **TX: City of Huntsville to Require Commerical and Residential Alarm Permits**
10.4.13 - KBTX 3 Bryan - College Station - The City of Huntsville recently amended its alarm ordinance, requiring those utilizing commercial and residential alarms within the city to have permits. The ordinance also outlines penalties for excessive false alarm calls at a given location. [More Info](#)
- **TX: Corpus Christi police response changes to minor wrecks, barking dogs... in effect Oct. 1**
10.1.13 - Corpus Christi Caller-Times - Residents must spend their time filling out crash reports, calling attendance officers and speaking with neighbors about noise issues... [More Info](#)
- **TX: False alarms drop in Paris**
9.24.13 - KXII Sherman - Paris, TX - False alarm calls in Paris have dropped after changes earlier this year to the city's burglar alarm ordinance. [More Info](#)
- **TX: Montgomery County Commissioners approve revised fire alarm regulations**
10.2.13 - Magnolia Potpourri - Montgomery County Commissioners approved a revised set of rules for the regulation of alarm systems Monday. [More Info](#)
- **VA: Fines for false alarms going up in Fredericksburg, Va.**
10.7.13 - Security Info Watch - In an effort to avoid wasting police resources--and to reduce the chances of accidents between darting police cruisers and regular drivers--the Fredericksburg City Council is raising the fines on repeat offenders. New fine schedule to take effect Jan. 1 ... [More Info](#)

Industry News

Courtesy of NESA

- **System Sensor Low Frequency Sounder Meets New NFPA Requirements for Commercial Sleeping Spaces**
10.1.13 – Systems Sensor - System Sensor has launched new low frequency notification appliances that meet the NFPA 72® requirements for all commercial sleeping spaces that begin in 2014. [More Info](#)
- **Fired AlarmForce CEO wants \$11.3 million in damages**
10.2.13 - Security System News - Toronto - The recently ousted CEO of AlarmForce is suing the company for more than \$11.3 million, claiming he was wrongfully dismissed and suggesting age discrimination was a reason. [More Info](#)
- **CPI sues ASG; ASG denies wrongdoing**
10.2.13 - Security System News - Charlotte, NC - CPI Security Systems has filed a lawsuit against the Alarm Security Group (ASG), accusing ASG of "raiding" sales reps from CPI by means of deceptive practices. [More Info](#)
- **Security industry to see more competition, not consolidation**
10.3.13 - Security Info Watch - Despite predictions of increased consolidation within the security industry, a new report released this week by IHS says that the industry will be marked by a rise in competition over the next several years, rather than big mergers and acquisitions. The research firm said that the global market for physical security equipment and services was worth \$110 billion 2012 and is expected to grow to \$170 billion by 2017. [More Info](#)
- **Kitchens Often Top Location for Home Fires**
10.7.13 - Marketwired via Yahoo! - Cooking is the No. 1 cause of home fires, and a significant contributor to home fire deaths, according to the National Fire Protection Association . Pella Windows and Doors encourages consumers to develop ... [More Info](#)

- **NIST researcher has improved firefighting techniques and saved lives**
10.7.13 – Washington Post - Dan Madrzykowski has spent a good portion of his time in government burning down buildings to study how fire behaves, resulting in radical changes in firefighting practices around the country that are saving lives and protecting property. [More Info](#)
- **Connected Nest Protect Reimagines the Smoke Detector**
10.8.13 - PC Magazine - Nest Labs expanded its lineup of connected appliances with Nest Protect, a connected fire alarm and carbon monoxide detector... [More Info](#)
- **Smoke Detectors to the Test: What Happens When They Fail?**
10.9.13 - WBAY Green Bay - As part of Fire Prevention Week, Action 2 News teamed up with the Green Bay Metro Fire Department, putting smoke detectors to the test. Two distinct types of technology exist in alarms – ionization... [More Info](#)
- **Pinnacle Security sued in lawsuit stemming from fatal fire**
10.9.13 - Security System News - Arlington Heights, IL - An insurance company is suing Pinnacle Security in an attempt to recover its costs in a 2011 lawsuit brought against Pinnacle and a monitoring company by the children of a firefighter who died in a house fire. What's at stake here? [More Info](#)

Please Share Your Newsletters and Tips with Us

We would like to see how you communicate with your alarm users. Please add FARA to your mailing list if you send out Newsletters or mailings with false alarm reduction information. Do you have a brochure that describes your ordinance or program? We would like to see it. Staff will review what we receive and share tips and information with your fellow members in later issues of this newsletter.

Please send your newsletters, tips and brochures to:
False Alarm Reduction Association
10024 Vanderbilt Circle, Unit 4
Rockville, MD 20850
bradshipp@4yoursolution.com

FARA Mission Statement

It is the mission of the False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA) to provide a forum for local government alarm ordinance professionals to exchange information on successful false alarm reduction programs, to serve as a clearinghouse for agencies seeking to reduce false alarms, and to foster an environment of cooperation among public safety, the alarm industry and the alarm users.

Contact Us

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