



# InfoLink

Information for Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Professionals

## FARA InfoLink July 2014 Edition

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## News from the Membership Committee

*Emily Pleasance, Membership Committee*

The membership committee is very busy recruiting new members thanks to all of those who submitted names to us during the symposium. We received many potential members to follow up on and look forward to reaching out to them in the upcoming weeks. Don't forget that the symposium isn't the only time to submit potential members to the committee. We'll gladly accept your referrals throughout the year! So keep them coming!

### **Attention!** Are your Membership Dues paid?

**Invoices for the 2014/15 year have gone out!**

### **DON'T** Risk losing the many fantastic membership benefits!

**Benefits such as...**

- Great networking environment consisting of Public Safety, Alarm Users and Alarm Industry personnel sharing tips and information on successful false alarm reduction programs
- Professional, informative Bulletins ready for distribution
- InfoLink to keep you informed on what's new
- Website access filled with abundant resource materials to assist you with running a successful False Alarm Reduction Unit!
- Professional Certification: A program which provides you with tools to demonstrate your professionalism and knowledge of alarm management

### **DO** Maintain your Membership and realize what FARA has to offer!

**E-Mail:** [info@faraonline.org](mailto:info@faraonline.org)

**Website:** <http://www.faraonline.org>

## Training & Certification Committee Update

*By Sherry Couey, Chair of the Training and Certification Committee*

The Training and Certification Committee is responsible for development of training materials for FARA members. It is also responsible for the administration of the Certified Alarm Manager Exam. While we work diligently on providing useful tools for both public safety and alarm industry members, we would like to remind you what is already available for your training needs.

In this Infolink edition, we would like to introduce you to a new feature titled "Training Spotlight." This is where we will shine the "spotlight" on a training presentation available on the FARA website for members. These presentations have been created using FARA publications and are available for download as a benefit of your FARA membership. Each presentation has been created in Power Point and converted to a .pdf format for download. Most of the presentations target a certain audience or topic, but you can mix and match to meet your needs. Today we feature "Door to Door Sales."

Now, most of you in Public Safety are aware of the challenges that come with dealing with alarm companies that utilize the door to door sales technique, which is very popular during the summertime. While there are companies that employ this method of sales in an ethical manner, there are still those who do not. Our presentation, "Door to Door Sales" is an excellent tool to assist alarm users in your jurisdiction in making informed decisions while considering the purchase of an alarm system. To view and download the "Door to Door Sales" training presentation, visit the FARA website, log in and go to the Member Info section, Publications and Materials and select Training Materials. There you will not only find "Door to Door Sales," but all the many other training presentations that have been created for your use.

Now that we have touched on your training needs, let's bring back an old favorite, the "CAM Spotlight" question and answer session. Throughout the year, we like to feature a FARA member who has achieved their Certification Alarm Manager status. This edition, we would like to celebrate Amanda Garner, Community Service Officer with Garden Grove Police Department in Southern California. Read on to find out more about Amanda!

## CAM Spotlight- Amanda Garner

*By Kerri McDonald, FARA President*

### BIO

1. **Current Position**

Community Service Officer with Garden Grove Police Department in Southern California.

2. **Hobbies or Interests**

In my spare time I design and make jewelry. I have a workshop set up in my back yard where I design and produce the jewelry. I use many different techniques including wire wrapping, soldering, cold fusion, lost wax carving and casting.

3. **How long have you been a member of FARA**

**and do you participate in any FARA committees or activities?**

I have been a member of FARA since 2008 and am currently serving on the Communications Committee.



### Certified Alarm Manager Experience

1. **When you did you first obtain your certification?**

May 1, 2014

2. **What made you decide to take the exam?**

I wanted to learn more about the alarm systems and industry to be able to educate the alarm users in my jurisdiction.

3. **Did you receive any response from employers, alarm industry, members of the community about your achievement?**

My supervisor is very proud that I took the extra step in obtaining more knowledge.

4. **Do you think accomplishing your certification will benefit your career or position as an alarm manager/coordinator? Has it made a difference in what you do?**

I am in the process of re-writing the alarm ordinance for Garden Grove. This has given me additional knowledge and insight that I will need, especially when the proposed ordinance goes to the City Council.

5. **Do you think others could benefit from achieving their Certification status?**

I have been working as an alarm coordinator since 2007 and there was a wealth of information that I learned, especially about the types of alarm systems and their components. This knowledge has helped me explain possible reasons why our alarm users are having false alarm activations.

6. **Where is your certificate now?**

On the wall in my office.

## Reduce costly false alarms with your home security system

7.10.14 – HeraldNet - By Angie Hicks - [More Info](#)

The occasional security system false alarm may seem like a minor homeowner hassle, but it's actually a nationwide problem you can help solve.

In researching this topic recently, our team found that more than 90 percent of alarm activations that trigger a police response are false alarms activated by user error, pet movement, poorly maintained equipment or other causes that don't involve criminal activity or danger.

All that crying wolf wastes about \$2 billion in police resources, our team learned, and lengthens the time it takes officials to respond to actual crises. And it can cost you, if you own one of the estimated 36 million home systems in the country. More than 3,000 U.S. municipalities charge false-alarm fines. First offenses are often forgiven or fined \$25 to \$35, but multiple instances may cost hundreds of dollars or more.

The key to reducing fines and wasted emergency response time is in your hands. Common mistakes include inputting incorrect codes, not alerting the security monitoring company to new contact information, and not knowing the correct passwords when the company calls about an alarm.

The user error rate tends to be highest in the first hours and days after system installation. Be aware that as a result, some company contracts specify a grace period during which they won't call police if the alarm is activated.

Security pros offer these tips for reducing the chance of a false alarm:

Train everyone with access to your home on how to disarm the system, how to contact the monitoring company, and which code words are needed to cancel an alarm by phone.

Test your system monthly. Check backup batteries annually.

Keep motion detectors clear of debris, such as spider webs and bugs. Make sure air drafts don't move curtains, plants or decorations. Check that protected doors and windows close correctly.

Alert the alarm company when you're out of town, change your contact information, have a remodeling project or a new pet (new systems factor in pets according to size).

Keep equipment in good repair and consider upgrading. Recently developed technology helps reduce the chances of false alarms by making them easier to use. Examples: disarming a system via text message, monitoring it by video or interacting with it via wireless key fob. Such features can cost from \$500 to \$2,000 for equipment and installation.

If you're installing a new home alarm system, determine your financial responsibilities regarding false alarms. Also, be sure to work with a reputable, reliable company. Only consider those that are appropriately licensed and registered with proper local or state authorities. Check their online reputation and take time to contact references. Don't neglect to read your contract carefully before signing.

Angie Hicks is the founder of Angie's List, [www.angieslist.com](http://www.angieslist.com), a resource for consumer reviews.

## Did you know? Voluntary codes and standards involving nuisance alarms have changed.

*NEMA Communications*

NEMA has produced a podcast series focused on smoke detection issues, including several discussing the changes to several voluntary national consensus codes and standards intended to reduce nuisance alarms. [More Info](#)

## FARA's Believe it or Not

By: Brad Shipp

- **Squirrels chomp on Winnipeg man's phone, internet services**  
6.23.14 - CBC.ca - His phone, internet and alarm system cut out every time it rains on those chewed up lines. Mattson said MTS has sent crews to repair the telephone lines in 30 ... [More Info](#)
- **Burglars make off with 100-pound rock**  
7.2.14 - Desert Dispatch - The business was hit early Sunday morning when Barstow police received a report of a burglary alarm at approximately 5:18 a.m., Lt. Mike Hunter said. [More Info](#)
- **Charges: Burglar found hiding in box of stuffed animals**  
7.1.14 - KOMO News - He said the alarm scared the hell out of him, so he climbed into the box. According to the charging documents, Howell, who claimed to know employees at the ... [More Info](#)
- **Ice cream cone lands alleged burglar behind bars, report says**  
7.16.14 - CBS News - According to police in Lewes, troopers responded to the Taramino Place Apartments around 10:50 p.m. on Monday, after an alarm was set off by a break in. [More Info](#)
- **Break-in suspects nabbed clad only in underpants**  
7.24.14 – Charleston Daily Mail - Fayette sheriff's deputies were dispatched at about 1:30 a.m. Thursday to investigate after a break-in alarm was sounded at Dollar General on the Mount Hope ... [More Info](#)

Do you have any stories you would like to share about 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 [bradshipp@4yoursolution.com](mailto:bradshipp@4yoursolution.com) and we'll put them in the next InfoLink for all to share!

## News on Door to Door Sales

Courtesy of NESAs

- **Overland police warn residents of alarm company scam**  
6.24.14- KMOV.com - Police say multiple residents on Tuesday reported a man coming to their homes saying he was from their alarm company. Authorities say the man told them he ... [More Info](#)
- **Authorities warning about deceptive practices used by home ...**  
6.25.14 - WSMV Nashville - Several of the larger alarm system companies have also banned together at ESX Nashville, a three-day home security conference to try and stop the issue of ... [More Info](#)
- **Better Business Bureau: How to choose the right alarm company**  
6.26.14 - Post-Bulletin - The installation of a home security system is much more common than in years past. In fact, many newer homes already come equipped with them. Not only can ... [More Info](#)
- **Better Business Bureau warns of telemarketing and door-to-door ...**  
7.11.14 – KTXS - Summer time is alarm salesmen time and currently the city of Abilene has 32 door to door salespeople permitted to sell alarms. Some salesmen are allegedly ... [More Info](#)
- **CBS4 Exposes Alarm Company Scam**  
7.15.14 - CBS Local - Miami (CBSMiami) – The CBS4 Investigative Unit has uncovered a scam going around South Florida involving alarm company salesmen—they are flat out lying ... [More Info](#)
- **Consumer Alert: Door-to-door security system sales should ...**  
7.16.14 - fox6now.com - During the spring and summer months, home security or alarm companies hire traveling sales agents to go door-to-door. In some cases, the sales agents use ... [More Info](#)
- **Amarillo Police Warn About Door-to-Door Alarm Sales Fraud**  
7.18.14 – MyHighPlains - Amarillo -- The Amarillo Police Dept. is aware of three recent instances of suspicious activity by people that identify themselves as door-to-door home alarm ... [More Info](#)
- **Watch out for these 'salespeople'**  
7.21.14 - SooToday.com - The owner then contacted ATS and learned that ATS did not have anyone named Jake employed; nor were they going door to door to sell alarm parts. [More Info](#)

- **Springfield woman warns of bogus burglar alarm upgrade**  
7.23.14 - Springfield News-Leader - That's the advice one Springfield woman has after a recent run-in with an alarm company — Vivint — that she says misrepresented the product being peddled. [More Info](#)
- **Security systems making people targets**  
7.22.14 - wtvr.com - ... want to know more about a man seen going door to door asking to help homeowners with ADT security systems change the batteries on their alarm systems. [More Info](#)
- **Possible Scam Artist Targeting ADT Customers in Virginia**  
7.24.14 – Security Sales & Integration - A man has approached several homeowners in Petersburg, claiming that he needs to change the batteries on their ADT security systems. [More Info](#)

## Public Safety Updates

*Courtesy of NESAs*

- **AR: Little Rock PD: Security Cameras Not Working to Best Ability**  
7.23.14 - Little Rock, Ark. - The police department is blaming low bandwidth for low quality video that the citywide surveillance system records. [More Info](#)
- **CA: Letter: Lack of police response to alarms confounding**  
7.8.14 - Enterprise-Record - The Chico Police Department is at it again. I love the new tactic by the police chief of not responding anymore to security alarms. The chief states they don't have ... [More Info](#)
- **CT: Help reduce high rate of false alarms in town**  
7.7.14 - Wilton Bulletin – The purpose of the alarm ordinance is to promote the responsible use of alarm systems in Wilton and reduce the number of false alarms. A reduction in false ... [More Info](#)
- **FL: Melbourne suspends contentious burglar-alarm plan, \$25 fee**  
7.24.14 – Florida Today - About 7,000 residents have home alarms and are affected by the program ... Instead of police administering the alarm registry program, the city contracted with ... [More Info](#)
- **GA: Another DeKalb Co. resident complains about 911 service**  
7.25.14 – WXIA-TV - Shelley Shaw said her smoke alarm went off Sunday night. She said her security company called 911, but was left on hold for several minutes before reaching ... [More Info](#)
- **GA: Man says he received false alarm ticket despite burglar's arrest**  
7.3.14 - WSB Atlanta - “I applaud APD for finding the person and arresting him but I can't believe the same police department chose to cite me for a false alarm for the exact same date,” ... [More Info](#)
- **IN: City will consider abatement renewals**  
7.7.14 - Journal Review - In other business, the Ordinances and Petitions committee voted to table an ordinance regarding an electronic burglary and alarm system policy for another ... [More Info](#)
- **KS: New rules coming for alarm owners**  
7.22.14 – KSN-TV - Under the new rules, a person will have to register their alarm system, they could be fined for false alarms, and law enforcement will stop responding if there are ... [More Info](#)
- **MD: Prince George's to require carbon monoxide detectors starting July 1**  
6.26.14 - Washington Post - “We'll try to help you get an alarm as opposed to giving you a ticket,” Brady said. Get updates on your area delivered via e-mail. Current Prince George's County ... [More Info](#)
- **MN: Minneapolis businesses wail over high costs of false alarms**  
7.17.14 - Minneapolis / St. Paul Business Journal - Minneapolis, which bills businesses and residents when burglar alarms mistakenly summon the police, charges more per false alarm than does St. Paul. [More Info](#)
- **MO: Mo. City Sees 14% Drop in False Alarms**  
7.24.14 – Security Sales & Integration - Springfield police suspect fines have played a role in the reduction in false alarms.. [More Info](#)
- **MO: O'Fallon seeks to address problems with 'false alarms'**  
7.9.14 – Newsmagazinetwork - Neske said the police department responded to 1,583 alarms in 2013, 647 of which were residential and 936 were from businesses. Approximately 70 percent ... [More Info](#)

- **NM: Alarm system registration violators pursued**  
7.10.14 - Ruidoso News - Five Lincoln County residents were served an ultimatum for violating the county's ordinance requiring home and business owners to register their alarm systems. [More Info](#)
- **PA: Council passes new laws regulating false alarms, parking spaces**  
7.3.14 - Scranton Times-Tribune - Amendments to Scranton laws regulating false alarms and parking lot licenses received final approval Wednesday from City Council. Under the new false alarm ... [More Info](#)
- **PA: Frequent false-alarm calls could come with a cost in Carnegie**  
7.16.14 - Tribune-Review - He said that with a majority of false-alarm calls, the borough's police ... have tried to broach the false alarm subject with Towers management in the past. [More Info](#)
- **PA: Salisbury seeks to bill insurance carriers for emergency services**  
6.27.14 - Allentown Morning Call - Seagreaves also pointed out that the current ordinance covers only police for false alarm calls and not the fire department. Soriano said staff will look into state ... [More Info](#)
- **SC: Firefighters Fed Up With False Alarms**  
6.19.14 – SSI - The Wade Hampton Fire Department wants to implement a new ordinance that will fine home and business owners for false fire alarms. [More Info](#)
- **TX: False alarm can be costly to the community**  
7.24.14 – TXK Today - False alarm, whether it be for a police or fire emergency, is always better than the real thing. But when false alarms are recurrent, they can become a strain on ... [More Info](#)
- **TX: Flower Mound amends alarm ordinance; council updated on ...**  
7.22.14 – Star Local Media - The Flower Mound Town Council on Monday approved an amendment to its alarm ordinance that aims to provide relief for residents and businesses that have a ... [More Info](#)
- **VA: Harrisonburg City Council Weighing False Alarms Ordinance**  
7.9.14 – WHSV - Council right now is weighing the pros and cons of the plan, to amend it so businesses would not have to pay for a possible new alarm monitoring system. [More Info](#)
- **VA: Suffolk takes steps to combat false 9-1-1 calls**  
6.24.14- WVEC.com - The reason behind this wasn't for the city to collect money with registration fees, but to reduce the number of false alarms requiring emergency personnel to ... [More Info](#)
- **WI: Experts address costly false alarms**  
7.4.14 - Leader-Telegram - In researching this topic recently, our team found that more than 90 percent of alarm activations that trigger a police response are false alarms activated by user ... [More Info](#)

## Industry News

*Courtesy of NESAs*

- **Security company ADT settles federal charges of deceptive advertising**  
6.24.14- The Oregonian - I wrote last year about other questionable claims that alarm company Vivint, which formerly operated as APX Alarm Security Solutions, had made as they went ... [More Info](#)
- **ADT Launches Full Offensive vs. Predatory Alarm Companies**  
7.1.14 - CEPro - At ESX 2014, ADT highlights its \$25,000 reward program for identifying security sales scams by holding a press conference with deputy from Tennessee state attorney general, ESA, CSAA and local homeowners association. [More Info](#)
- **PPVAR completes task in time for ESX**  
7.4.14 – Security Systems News - Nashville, Tenn.—Meeting the ESX deadline it set for itself late last year, PPVAR has completed its video verification document. What are the guidelines and how might they affect your business? [More Info](#)
- **Buyer beware: 'Bad actors' siphon RMR from reputable alarm companies**  
7.8.14 Security Info Watch - New ADT campaign highlights industry efforts to root out deceitful sales practices ... [More Info](#)
- **Homeowner says security system failed her four times**  
7.7.14 - KY3 - However, multiple times, she says, her security alarm went off and she never heard ... realizing as we got closer to the kitchen, the alarm was going off," she said. [More Info](#)

- **Watching your home from thousands of miles away**  
7.7.14 - WACH.com - "It's becoming standard practice that most people don't get just a plain old home security alarm anymore, they get a home security alarm automation system. [More Info](#)
- **NFPA 72-2016 proposed changes**  
7.10.14 - Consulting-Specifying Engineer - NFPA 72: National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code technical committees have been busy reviewing and preparing revisions to the 2013 edition of the code that ... [More Info](#)
- **CT: Do-It-Yourself Home Security**  
7.14.14 – NBC Connecticut - Some consumers are choosing to bypass traditional alarm companies, which are often perceived as costing more and requiring a long contract, according to ... [More Info](#)
- **ASG consolidates in South Texas**  
7.16.14 - Security Systems News - Beltsville, Md.—In a deal that boosts its RMR in South Texas to \$1.2 million, super-regional ASG Security has acquired a longtime alarm company there. What is the acquisition and how will the buy help ASG "dominate" the region? [More Info](#)
- **Red Hawk sells monitored accounts**  
7.11.14 - Security Systems News - San Antonio—The wholesale monitored accounts of Red Hawk Monitoring, a subsidiary of Red Hawk Fire & Security, have been sold. How many accounts? How many dealers? Who's the buyer? [More Info](#)
- **NYC says OK to detecting smoke via video**  
7.16.14 - Security Systems News - Sparks, Md.—Video image smoke detection is now accepted under the New York City Building Code, opening a large new market for such detection systems. What applications is this detection method ideal for? [More Info](#)
- **ID: AG Office, security firm settle**  
7.19.14- Coeur d'Alene Press - Consumers who paid early termination or "buy-out" fees to their prior alarm monitoring companies may be eligible to receive restitution. Todd Dvorak ... [More Info](#)
- **How Thieves Can Hack and Disable Your Home Alarm System**  
7.23.14 – Wired - But a more insidious security threat lies with devices that aren't even on the internet: wireless home alarms. Two researchers say that top-selling home alarm ... [More Info](#)
- **Homeowners sue security alarm companies over burglary**  
7.25.14 – The Louisiana Record - Danna G. and Dennis Necaise filed suit against XCEL Security Systems LLC and Alarm Monitoring Services Inc. in the 24th Judicial District Court on June 24. [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](mailto: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

False Alarm Reduction Association  
10024 Vanderbilt Circle, Unit 4  
Rockville, MD 20850  
Email: [info@faraonline.org](mailto:info@faraonline.org)  
<http://www.faraonline.org>

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[info@faraonline.org](mailto:info@faraonline.org)

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