



InfoLink

Information for Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Professionals

FARA Infolink March 2005

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Join us in Miami for the 2005 Training Symposium

Time is drawing near for the 9th annual FARA Training Symposium! Please be sure to join us May 2 through May 6, 2005 at the Sonesta Hotel & Suites Coconut Grove in beautiful downtown Miami, Florida. We are sure to have fun in the sun, while learning effective strategies to combat false alarms. Back, by popular demand, is FARA Feud, a raucous game pitting your knowledge of alarm management against your opponent. You will also receive training on such things as selecting alarm management software, how alarm systems work, setting up an alarm school, and alarm unit best practices, to name just a few.

Visit www.faraonline.org **today** to download your registration packet and plan on joining us for this very worthwhile week of intensive, interactive training designed to help you do your job more effectively and efficiently. Don't be left out of this terrific opportunity!

Hotel Deadline is April 16th

Make sure to reserve your room at the host hotel for the International Training Symposium before the deadline of April 16th!

Sonesta Hotel & Suites Coconut Grove

2889 McFarlane Road
Coconut Grove, FL 33133
P: (305) 529-2828

Special FARA Rates

- * Standard 260 sq ft rm - \$99 per night **Sold out!**
- * Deluxe w kitchenette 480 sq ft rm - \$124 per night
- * Biscayne Suite 800 sq ft rm Bedroom with connected room with Sleeper Sofa & Kitchen - \$164 per night

[Visit the hotel web site for more information.](#)

Please Send In Your Nominations

FARA is dedicated to honoring those in our profession, who have shown exemplary commitment to the reduction of false alarms and to establishing and maintaining positive working relationships. Are you proud of your alarm management program? Do you want the world to know about it? If so, then tell us! Let us help you advertise your success – whether you are in public safety or in the alarm industry!

Please send in your nominations for FARA's False Alarm Reduction Achievement Awards. The Achievement Awards will be presented for the second time in Miami. Descriptions of each nominee will be presented at the conference. Attendees will be asked to select one winner for each category. Both public safety and associate members can submit nominations for any category listed below.

- **Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award:** Alarm reduction program has shown meaningful or significant reduction in number of false of alarms over a 3 to 5 year period. Last year's winner was the Huntsville, Alabama Police Department.
- **Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award:** Alarm reduction program has shown meaningful or significant reduction in number of false of alarms over a 3 to 5 year period. Last year's winner was ADT Security Systems, Inc. for their voluntary implementation of enhanced call verification.
- **FARA Achievement Award:** Significant or meaningful contributions towards the FARA mission. Last year's winner was the Alarm Association of Florida (AAF).

Now that we have honored your department or company, let's also reward specific individuals, who have contributed the most to their department or company, the community and to FARA. Is there someone you know, who fits this bill? Tell us! We know that great things are being done all across North America by incredibly dedicated professionals, but we don't know who you are unless you tell us.

Please send in your nominations for FARA's Public Safety and Associate Member of the Year Awards. Both public safety and associate members can submit nominations for either category.

Past recipients of the Public Safety Member of the Year Award are:

- 2004- Rick Moore
- 2003- Rex Bell
- 2002- Denise Shaw and Amy Lobdell
- 2001- James Cogswell
- 2000- Lt. W. Patrick Kenny
- 1999- Shanna Werner
- 1998- Patti Rea and Norma Beaubien

Past recipients of the Associate Member of the Year Award are:

- 2004- Tony Fague
- 2003- Not awarded
- 2002- Ron Walters and Brad Shipp
- 2001- Kathleen Schraufnagel
- 2000- Jennifer Gehring

- 1999- Susan Brenton
- 1998- Matt Wald

Nominations for each award can be submitted to FARA c/o Brad Shipp at bradshipp@4yoursolution.com on or before April 15th.

FARA Announces Regional Training Session In Dallas

FARA is pleased to announce the creation of an interactive two-day training course for public safety and alarm industry professionals entitled "How to Implement Your Successful Solution to False Alarms." The course is designed to help open the lines of communication between public safety and the alarm industry, and to show how, by working together, they can enact local ordinances, which meet the needs of a specific community. Some topics covered in the course include common alarm management terms, defining the scope of the false alarm problem, causes and solutions, available resources, communication, and design, adoption, and implementation of a false alarm reduction program.

The inaugural presentation of the course will occur on March 30 – 31, 2005 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at the ADI – Dallas facility in Farmers Branch, Texas. Through the generous support of the Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association and the North Texas Alarm Association, FARA will be able to present this course FREE of charge to any public safety agency employee, as well as to members of the TBFAA, NTAA and FARA.

FARA President Norma Beaubien said, "I am truly humbled by the incredible support of the TBFAA and NTAA, which will allow us to offer this course to many more people than would otherwise be able to attend."

TBFAA President Chip Bird said, "As representatives of the alarm industry in Texas we are committed to doing whatever we can to reduce false alarms. We are happy to do our part to help localities manage this problem. And I look forward to learning more about the challenges that public safety professionals face."



NTAA President Chris Russell, said, "We are proud to support any venue that brings industry and public safety together to tackle the false alarm issue. My hope is that the knowledge and awareness we all gain at the training session will lead to more productive exchanges in the future between public safety and industry."

Students in the course will receive a course notebook, which contains over ten different guides dealing with different aspects of alarm management, 14 false alarm reduction bulletins that can be used for education purposes as bill stuffers or separate mailings, five model alarm ordinances and more. The course also provides many interactive exercises, where students will take what they have learned and apply it to real-life situations.

FARA will be presenting the training course in Toronto, Canada and in the Chicago area later this year. FARA is looking to present this course elsewhere and is happy to partner with others, like it did with the TBFAA and NTAA. If you believe your community and the surrounding area would benefit from such a training opportunity, please contact FARA Executive Director Brad Shipp at bradshipp@4yoursolution.com or at 301/519-9237 to see how FARA can bring this exciting training course to you.

Space is still available for the Dallas course. Please visit the FARA web site today at www.faraonline.org to download your registration form for this FREE class. It's not too late to become part of the solution, and we look forward to seeing a great number of public safety and alarm industry professionals in Dallas!

Regional Training Beta Class a Success

FARA held a beta-test of the "How to Implement Your Successful Solution to False Alarms" class in the Washington-Metropolitan area on Wednesday, January 26, 2005 through Thursday, January 27, 2005 in Beltsville, MD. The class was presented by Jim Cogswell and cosponsored by the Maryland Burglar & Fire Alarm Association. We are very grateful to the MBFAA for their support of our efforts in educating both public safety officials and alarm industry professionals. Our thanks also go out to ADI for providing the meeting room and to the FARA members from Baltimore County, Montgomery County, Prince Georges County and the City of Greenbelt, who attended and provided valuable input to help us prepare the final version of the class.



Portland Asks For Your Assistance

Amy Lobdell of the Portland Police Bureau would like to know how many FARA members accept VISA/Master Card etc., for payments of alarm permits, fees, and/or false alarm fines.

Please reply to her directly at ALobdell@police.ci.portland.or.us.

Amy Lobdell
Program Coordinator
Portland Police Bureau
Alarm Administration
(503) 823-0488
(503) 823-0507 FAX

FARA and SIAC Develop PDQ '06 Award Program

The Security Industry Alarm Coalition (SIAC) and the False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA) will announce a North American Police Quality Dispatch (PDQ) '06 Award program at a news conference April 7, 2005 at the International Security Conference-West in Las Vegas. The award is designed to recognize alarm installing and monitoring companies following established industry practices for the highest quality in order to reduce the number of unnecessary police dispatch requests.

SIAC is the central resource for the security industry providing information on alarm management and public safety alarm dispatch policies. It set up the PDQ Award in cooperation with the False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA) to promote cooperation in improving the quality of the installation, monitoring and response to security alarm systems.

Honeywell Security Group, a global leader in providing product and service solutions for homes, buildings and industry, and Security Sales and Integration (SSI), a leading industry publication, are providing financial and in-kind support to promote the award and bring the winning security company's executives to ISC-West to be recognized.

"All of us recognize that for security systems to provide optimal protection for users, they must be installed properly, their owners must understand how to use them and they must be monitored and answered in a timely manner," Stan Martin, SIAC executive director said. "We organized this contest to honor those who faithfully follow the best practices identified by our industry, especially enhanced call verification."

Enhanced call verification (ECV) means having alarm monitoring stations call an owner's emergency number (often a cell phone) in addition to the main business number to confirm that the alarm was not sent due to human error. Once an alarm owner verifies that he didn't accidentally trip the alarm, police are immediately alerted.

"Our industry is sensitive to the issue of invalid alarms and believes we can reduce their numbers by making sure security systems are used properly," Martin said. "Alarms are often a family or business' first line of defense, safeguarding their personal safety and property before police arrive. An effective partnership with law enforcement is mandatory for the security industry."

"Reducing the number of unnecessary police dispatch requests enhances the effectiveness of alarm systems, improves officer safety and saves the taxpayer. We are proud to help recognize those who are making the extra effort through this award," Norma Beaubien, President of FARA said.

The winning alarm installation and monitoring company team will receive their award from a local law enforcement representative at a ceremony in their town.

Representatives of the winning security company team will also receive an all-expense paid trip to Las Vegas for the International Security Conference West in April 2006 to present their success story. Highlights of their collaboration will also be published in Security Sales and Integration magazine.

Participating in the announcement news conference, to be led by Stan Martin, executive director of SIAC, will be Jim Cogswell First Vice President of the False Alarm Reduction Association.

FARA Awards SIAC Grants for 2005 Symposium

FARA is pleased to announce that it received and awarded many grant requests for public safety officials to attend the 2005 Annual International Training Symposium in Miami, Florida May 2-6, 2005. Grants were approved for Pamela Lambaird, City of Greenbelt Maryland; Mary Rodriguez, Travis County Texas Sheriff's Office; Tom McElroy, Collier County Florida Sheriff's Office; Randall Mohr, Olathe Kansas PD; Stacey Peacock and Kathy Hinckley, Barnstable Massachusetts PD; Alison Turgeon, Calgary Alberta Canada Police Service; Annmarie Reno, Lee County Florida Sheriff's Office; Thomas Durnan, Hempstead Florida PD; Aleeta Haring, Lafayette Louisiana PD; and Brad Wahab, Charlotte-Mecklenberg North Carolina PD.

The FARA Training Grant is made possible by funding obtained from the Security Industry Alarm Coalition (SIAC). FARA thanks SIAC for their generosity in providing funding to allow public safety personnel to attend training opportunities on alarm management.

Featured Bulletin- Springtime False Alarm Reduction Tips!

Even with snow still on the ground in some places, Spring really is just around the corner! This year, when you do your Spring cleaning in your home or business, why not do some Spring cleaning on your alarm system as well?

The full list of bulletins, which have been approved by the board, can be accessed on our web site at http://www.faraonline.org/html/consumer_tips.html



Alarm Plan Deserves Chance In Fremont

By Scott Herhold
Mercury News

Before last week, I wasn't ready to join the battle in Fremont about whether the cops should respond to burglar alarms. Dennis Wolfe spurred me into enlisting.

A beefy, outspoken insurance salesman who has done war with Fremont politicians before, Wolfe is calling for residents to buy guns to protect their homes if the police stop responding to routine alarms. To be kind, the pack-your-heat answer is a ridiculous idea. While I have no doubt that some people handle guns well, statistics show that folks who get shot at home are often not the bad guys.

Wolfe, 52, who calls himself a patriot, isn't backing down. He's circulating fliers suggesting that people obtain permits to carry concealed weapons. And he's used the R-word about Mayor Bob Wasserman: recall. ``If you're that stubborn, you're obviously not fit to lead the people," he told me.

A good choice?

So is the new policy good or bad? After looking at it, I've come to a conclusion that surprised me. I'm convinced that Fremont police Chief Craig Steckler is right. Absolutely right. He deserves kudos, not brickbats.

Steckler is proposing that police stop responding to ordinary alarms unless an eyewitness sees the crime or it's captured independently on an audio or video monitor. He says this will free cops from false alarms, which are about 99 percent of all alarms.

You read this and you think, ooh, open house and sorbet punch for the bad guys. If they can be sure the cops won't respond, then my sound system and jewelry are at risk.

The truth, however, is that policing is always a matter of choices. The cops can't arrest every lawbreaker. And Steckler legitimately has confronted the subsidy that police departments give alarm companies. It's worked this way for decades: You sell alarms. We police will respond, even if 98 percent or 99 percent of calls are false.

Sorry. That's crying wolf too often. The cops have more important things to respond to than stray balloons or iguanas (yes, both have set off alarms). The alarm companies should make a more reliable product. If police stop responding, the companies can contract with security guards to arrive more quickly. I know the argument. We might as well host a convention of thieves. But the facts don't really back this up. In Salt Lake City, which imposed the "verified response" system late in 2000, burglaries increased by 1 percent the first year, 12 percent the second year, and declined 6 percent the third year. In Yakima, Wash., they dropped 14 percent the first year.

Local conditions

My guess is that all these things have more to do with local conditions -- the economy, who's been released from prison -- than with the deterrent effect of alarms. "What we've found is that burglars want to work in anonymity," said Shanna Werner, the alarm administrator for the Salt Lake City police. "Alarm companies will tell you that 90 percent of the deterrent is a sign and stickers."

The argument about crime, meanwhile, doesn't take into account the upside of freeing up cops' time. In Salt Lake City, the police reduced their response time for high-priority calls by two minutes. Two minutes can mean a lot in a serious crime.

Naturally, Wolfe doesn't agree with any of this. He says the cops have plenty of downtime. And he's gotten involved in a nasty spat with Wasserman, a former police chief. Wolfe has questioned Wasserman's mental health. Wasserman has been quoted as saying Wolfe is a nut or smoking something. Wolfe has demanded that the mayor prove what he calls a "vicious" charge.

All the name-calling is a sidelight to the real issue: The cops have better things to do than respond to false alarms. Give Steckler a chance to prove his plan works. It's worked elsewhere.

"False Alarm"

Decatur Daily News (Ala.) (01/25/05); Paschenko, Chris

Police in Decatur, Ala., have concluded that the majority of the business and residential security alarms that they are alerted to are accidentally triggered, rather than true security incidents that require attention. Officers are forced to respond to so many false alarms that it is cutting into officers' other duties, police say. Decatur police statistics show that only 198 of 2,212 alarm calls received by Decatur police in 2004 were legitimately related to crime, with these incidents including bank robberies, burglaries, or evidence of crime, such as open doors or broken windows.

In 2000, the police began cracking down on false alarms by instituting a program that fined repeat false-alarm offenders \$250 for 11 or more false alarms in a one-year period, with a business's permit for having an alarm system revoked after the 12th false alarm. "And we will not issue a permit for an alarm until they can certify through the company the problem has been corrected and the system is error-free," said Lt. Dennis Hughes, the officer in charge of Decatur's Alarm Unit. One bank ignored police warnings about repeat offenses related to its vault alarm system and incurred a \$1,150 fine, and a restaurant incurred a \$1,405 fine because a manager had ignored the mailed warnings from the police.

Hughes is a proponent of alarm systems for businesses, explaining that his experience has shown that most criminals will bypass businesses protected by alarms. The False Alarm Reduction Association offers a Web site that provides advice on purchasing security alarms and how to avoid triggering false alarms.

Cry Wolf Receives Patent

Congratulations to FARA Associate Member- AOT Public Safety Corporation on obtaining a patent from the US Patent Office titled " System and Methods for False Alarm Tracking" for their CryWolf Software.

The patent was issued to inventor Edward Chicca on February 15th of this year. For more information visit their web site at <http://www.psc-crywolf.com/home.html>.

False Alarm Update: Milwaukee Chief Says Verified Response Will Continue

Mar 03, 2005, MILWAUKEE -- The police chief in Milwaukee says verified response has been a success, but left open the possibility that she would consider dropping the policy if the city would hire more officers. Police Chief Nannette Hegerty presented a six-month status report on Milwaukee's verified response policy to Milwaukee Common Council Committee on March 3.

The new policy — where police won't respond to a burglar alarm unless it has been verified by the alarm company — went into effect on Sept. 19. According to the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, Hegerty says the policy has resulted in better response time and told the committee it will remain in place.

However, she also told the aldermen that she would consider returning to the old alarm policy of immediately responding to all burglar alarms if there were 1,500 officers on her force. Currently, the department has 1,381 officers.

The meeting was not open to public comment, though alarm company representatives still attended the meeting. An official from Brink's Security Systems told the *Journal-Sentinel* that it has seen a 260-percent increase in break-ins over the past six months compared to the same period a year earlier — From five to 13 break-ins.

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Wisconsin Bill Would Require Police Response to Burglar Alarms

Mar 09, 2005, MILWAUKEE -- A Wisconsin state senator is introducing a bill that would require police to respond

to all burglar alarms. The bill, by Sen. Jeff Plale (D), would be a response to Milwaukee police chief's September implementation of verified response in her city.

Plale told the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* that public safety should override concerns about drops in funding for officers. The bill would only apply at this point to Milwaukee, the only city with a verified response policy in the state.

Milwaukee Police Chief Nannette Hegerty told a committee of the city's common council March 3 that verified response has been a success and will continue. However, Hegerty left an opening for the possible end of verified response if more funding can be raised for more officers.

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False Alarm Update: Second California City Considers Total Verified Response

Feb 28, 2005, SIMI VALLEY, Calif. -- The city council in the Southern California city of Simi Valley will be considering whether to enact a verified alarm response policy, joining Fremont, Calif., with verified response policies in the state. Police in the Ventura County city, about 40 miles northwest of Los Angeles, say that 98 percent of the 3,805 alarm calls it received last year were false and the new policy is needed for the department to better deal with real emergencies.

Under the new policy, burglar alarms will need to be verified by a video feed, an eyewitness or a private security guard before police will respond, according to the *Ventura County Star*. The Simi Valley City Council will hear the new ordinance on April 4 and may vote on its passage.

"Our whole goal is to provide a better service to the community as a whole," Sgt. Stephanie Shannon, Simi Valley Police spokeswoman, told the *Star*. "A minimum of two officers are taken away from legitimate-type calls to handle these false alarms."

Simi Valley, with a population of around 117,000, would be the second California city to switch to a total verified response policy. Fremont will become the first total verified response city in California on March 20. Los Angeles police do not immediately respond to a burglar alarm at an alarm customer with more than two false alarms in a year unless it is verified at the source, but will still dispatch the call to all units who can respond at their discretion.

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Brink's Home Security Installs Free System On Fox TV's "Renovate My Family"

IRVING, Texas (March 7, 2005) – Brink's Home Security, Inc. donated a state-of-the-art security alarm system as part of its participation in Fox TV's "Renovate My Family." The system was installed at a home in the Watts area of Los Angeles during recent filming for the upcoming season of the show.

For the show, which airs on Friday nights at 9:00 Eastern Standard Time, families in need are selected, then expert teams renovate their home and help family members remove other obstacles to their goals.

"The show is about life improvement. Every family faces challenges, from financial to the physical, and we're looking to give families in need a new opportunity to reach some of their goals in life. It's a great way to jumpstart families in the direction they're looking to go," said Adam Reno, an associate producer for the show.

"To make the show successful, we rely on respected companies like Brink's Home Security to donate time

and resources. It's directly through their efforts that we are able to get work done quickly, while keeping costs down," Reno said.

"We're pleased to be associated with a show that improves the lives of families who are working to overcome obstacles to their goals. Brink's Home Security plans to participate in a number of 'Renovate My Family' shows to install systems that that will help improve the families' lives and provide them with a sense of security and peace-of-mind in the newly renovated home," said Dwayne Sigler, Senior Vice President of Marketing, Brink's Home Security.

The home of the family on the show is totally renovated, and Brink's got involved at the beginning. "We met with production, walked through the house to review the layout, then discussed the best equipment to meet their needs," said Tony Cervantes, General Manager of Brink's Home Security's Los Angeles Branch.

"The renovation normally takes place during a one-week time period, so we want all the projects completed quickly. Brink's and the other companies working with us have to meet tight deadlines and do quality work. It takes an incredible amount of organization and effort, but it pays off when we see the families' reactions," Reno said.

Brink's sent a crew of three highly trained employees to the site, who worked quickly, efficiently and safely to complete a quality installation in the midst of a hectic renovation effort – Cervantes, Job Rivas, Technical Manager, and Lonnie DeVito, Supervisor. All three work out of the Los Angeles Branch.

Checklist: Finding The Right Alarm Company For Residential Needs

Sometimes we don't know what to look for in an alarm company or service provider. Home security systems are beneficial for any family, but don't be fooled by those companies who promise more than what they deliver. Next time you're looking for a new security alarm system for your house, take the time to research each system and provider that you have an interest in.

Janice Lieberman, consumer correspondent, offers tips on finding the right alarm company and service provider.

- o Get at least three estimates from different service providers.
- o Check the company's history -- how long it has been in business.
- o Remember to verify that the company is licensed.
- o Ask for references and take the time to check them personally.
- o Inquire about warranties on equipment in case something breaks down, and if there are options for extended warranties.

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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 managers 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 law enforcement, the alarm industry and the alarm users.

Contact Us

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Comments and suggestions regarding FARA's InfoLink are both encouraged and welcomed. If you would like to submit an article for publication, or if you have any questions or concerns about this newsletter, please contact the FARA Board of Directors at 301/519-9237, or by e-mail at: info@faraonline.org

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