



InfoLink

Information for Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Professionals

FARA Infolink August 2005

- Assistance Request- CP-01 Study
- Assistance Request- Outsourcing Companies
- Beaubien Resigns From IQ Board
- Assistance Request- IQ Companies
- Texas Governor Signs Landmark Legislation to Manage Alarms
- Non-Response Policy Proposed for Dallas
- Call For Entries- PDQ Award
- Associations Partner On Alarm Data Exchange
- Featured Bulletin- Are You Ready for Vacation?

Assistance Request- CP-01 Study

The Security Industry Association (SIA) has commissioned a study, which seeks to determine if CP-01 compliant alarm panels serve their intended purpose of reducing the incidence of false alarms. The first phase of the study is to determine the viability of the existing data. Your input on this survey will assist in determining that fact. If there is a determination that such data exists, then the next phase will be an assessment of the effectiveness of CP-01 panels. J. P. Freeman Co. Inc., which provides research and consulting, has been selected to perform the study. I would greatly appreciate it if you would assist in this endeavor by completing the short survey below and returning it to me via email no later than August 12, 2005. Please include your department name and address, as well as contact information for the person completing the survey; i.e., name, phone number, email address. Your information will be used anonymously in the study, but we may need to contact you for clarification.

1. Do you have an alarm management ordinance?
2. When did it go into effect?
3. Is that ordinance enforced?
4. Does your ordinance require the installation of CP-01 compliant panels?
5. Do you have a mechanism for tracking the alarm usage of CP-01 compliant installations?

Thank you very much for your participation in this phase of the project. Obviously, the more responses we receive, the more statistically reliable the data and conclusions will be. Please let me know if you have any questions.

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Assistance Request- Outsourcing Companies

Stacey A. Peacock, Alarm Administrator at Barnstable Police Dept. is in the process of evaluating outsourcing companies to manage all or some of their false alarm reduction programs. She began meeting with vendors at the end of July. Please send her any information you have on outsourcing companies, as well as any pros or cons with using outsourcing vendors so she can prepare for the meetings.

Stacey A. Peacock
Alarm Administrator
Barnstable Police Dept.
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Beaubien Resigns From IQ Board

FARA President Norma Beaubien has resigned from the Installation Quality Board due to increased work demands and personal considerations and turned over the responsibility of representing law enforcement on the board to Steve Heggeman of Baltimore County, MD. Beaubien has served on the IQ board since its inception and has helped to create many of the requirements and procedures that govern the program. The goals of the program are to raise the overall quality and false alarm control effectiveness of electronic security and life safety systems. Throughout the program, law enforcement have been given the opportunity to comment on the qualifications of companies as they seek or renew IQ certification. For information on the program visit <http://www.igcertification.org/index.html>

Assistance Request IQ

Hello, my name is Steve Heggemann and I need your help. I have been elected to serve on the Installation Quality Certification Board of Directors as their Law Enforcement Representative.

As members of FARA, I believe we have an obligation to help the Alarm Industry identify the companies that demonstrate, through their actions, a sustained commitment to reducing false alarms. Your interaction with thousands of alarm system users and hundreds of alarm companies provides you with a unique perspective from which to evaluate a company's sustained commitment to reducing false alarms.

I hope that all of you will take the time to respond with your comments about the companies seeking Installation Quality Certification or renewal of their IQ Certification. Your comments can be very brief. Please be specific. *"I spoke with a representative of company ZZZZ and it took them 10 days to inspect and repair an alarm system that generated five false in the first two weeks of operation"* is much more useful than *"Company ZZZZ does work to reduce their customers false alarm"*. If I am going to vote against a company, I will need to have specifics. I want to be able to vote for companies that deserve IQ Certification. Do not forget to relay positive comments.

Please send your comments to me at sheggemann@co.ba.md.us by Friday August 19, 2005. I look forward to being your voice on the Installation Quality Certification Board.

- AAA Alarm Company, Bangor, ME
- AAA Alarms, Inc., El Paso, TX
- A-Alarm Security Co., Columbus, GA
- Affiliated Central Inc., Brooklyn, NY
- Alarm Watch, Inc., Hunt Valley, MD
- All American Alarms Inc., Colorado Springs, CO
- Allied Central Services, Inc. (Division of Altronics Security Systems), Bethlehem, PA
- Allsafe Security, Inc., Albuquerque, NM
- Amalgamated Security Services Limited, St. James, Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
- American Security Alarm, LLC, St. Joseph, MI
- Anchor Security Services IT, LLC, Theodore, AL

- Best Security Services, Little Rock, AR
- C.O.P.S. Monitoring Services, Williamstown, NJ
- Cen-Signal (SSC Services, Inc.), Columbus, GA
- CSSS, Inc. (dba) Central Station Security Systems, Anaheim, CA
- Deiter Bros. Fuel Co., dba 4 Season's Security, Bethlehem, PA
- Direct Security Systems, Inc., Depew, NY
- Emergency 24, Inc., Chicago, IL
- First Security Alarm Company, Reno, NV
- Fort Knox Alarm & Security, LLC, Osage Beach, MO
- General Monitoring Services, Inc., Long Beach, CA
- Gold Star Security & More, Osage Beach, MO
- Golden Eagle Technologies, LLC, McAllen, TX
- Innovative Sound & Security, Inc., Burlington, NC
- Iron Clad Security Systems dba Kennedy Electric, Yulee, FL
- Master Installers, Inc., Las Vegas, NV
- Monitoring America Alarm Co-op, Tulsa, OK
- Park Audio and Video, Altoona, PA
- Rapid Response Monitoring Services, Inc., Syracuse, NY
- Reliable Alarms, Inc., Lansing, MI
- Safety Shield Fire & Security Inc., Long, SC
- Storm Security LTD, London, KY
- Superior Prevention, Inc., Greenville, SC
- Total Security Inc., Spokane, WA
- Total Watch Security, Inc., Cathedral City, CA
- Wireless Authority, Adrian, MI

Texas Governor Signs Landmark Legislation to Manage Alarms

Austin, TEXAS (July 8, 2005) – Texas Governor Rick Perry recently signed landmark legislation that establishes a framework for managing security alarms within the state, the Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association (TBFAA) announced. The bill, SB 568, outlines provisions for municipalities to follow when they develop alarm ordinances or policies.

The bill contains significant provisions designed to drive down the number of calls to police to dispatch a vehicle when an alarm proves to be inadvertent. Cutting down the number of these calls saves police resources.

Three key features are included in the bill to help reduce the number of these calls to dispatch police: An industry equipment standard, called CP-01; an escalating fine structure when an alarm proves to be inadvertent; and Enhanced Call Verification (ECV), where the monitoring center places two calls to a customer to increase the probability of a valid alarm before contacting law enforcement to dispatch an officer.

“We worked cooperatively with law enforcement and legislators to ensure these standards were put in place to reduce unnecessary dispatches. This a landmark piece of legislation for the industry because it creates statewide standards in Texas,” said Malcolm Reed, Chairman of TBFAA’s Legislative Committee. “We appreciate the hard work and involvement of the law enforcement community, and the efforts of several key legislators who believe in the benefits the legislation provides the citizens of Texas. Everyone involved was committed to the common goal of improving alarm management,” said Rodney Hooker, former President of TBFAA and a member of the Legislative Committee.

The CP-01 equipment standard has many enhanced features and default settings designed to minimize customer error, such as giving alarm users additional time to set the alarm and leave their home or business, and additional time to disarm the alarm when entering the premise. ECV -- placing two calls to a customer to ensure no user error initiated the alarm prior to dispatch -- has been demonstrated in several communities across the United States to reduce false dispatches.

Combined with an alarm permit system, which is also included in the legislation, escalating fines also help serve to reduce false dispatches by creating a monetary incentive for the alarm owner to detect and fix errors. "We're pleased to see all these components included in the legislation. They are part of a coordinated, successful plan to address the core problems associated with false dispatches," said Stan Martin, Executive Director of the Security Industry Alarm Coalition (SIAC), an industry group focusing on alarm management issues.

A statement clarifying legislative intent was also included in the conference committee report dealing with a requirement mandating public input. It stated that the intent of the language in SB 568 is "to prohibit cities and municipal police departments from eliminating first response to consumer alarm systems without first holding public hearings where citizen alarm users will have the opportunity to voice concerns or support with such a municipal ordinance or policy."

"We feel it is imperative as part of our country's democratic principles to include this public comment provision, and are grateful to Senator Bob Deuell for inserting the statement of legislative intent," Reed said.

Non-Response Policy Proposed for Dallas

Quick work from SIAC and NTAA may be averting a dramatic alarm policy change

Geoff Kohl, editor
SecurityInfoWatch.com

Will Dallas go to a non-response policy for burglar alarms?

Stan Martin of SIAC and Chris Russell of the North Texas Alarm Association both hope not, and they're working to make sure that Dallas doesn't move down the path to non-response, or as some call it, verified response.

The brou-ha-ha started on July 21 when a news report from Dallas CBS affiliate Channel 11 reported that Dallas Chief of Police David Kunkle was going to propose a major alarm policy change to the city council. According to Kunkle, the city was dealing with a high number of false alarms – out of some 62,000 reported burglar alarms, some 60,000 or so were false, requiring some 47,000 man hours of time – and his response would have been to have the city's police force stop responding to all security alarms except for panic and hold-up alarms unless the alarms were visually verified.

Fortunately, with the news break on CBS 11 and the subsequent response from the NTAA and SIAC, the challenge may have been averted. Martin and Russell have been working the phones to get in touch with Dallas City Council members to alert them to what a non-response policy would mean and how it would affect the citizenship.

But what seemed to hit home the most to the council members according to Martin and Russell was that the recently passed state law governing alarm ordinances would keep the city out of significant money if the town went to a non-response.

"The recent change in state law prohibits the collecting of a fine for a false alarm if they don't respond," explains Russell, who serves as president of the NTAA. "That means missing some \$4 million worth of income, money that's collected from the alarm permit fees and alarm fines."

Russell estimates that with the new law, which allows changes in how alarm ordinances can collect fines and fees, the income from alarm permitting and false alarm fines could even top \$5 million for the city.

With the news story from CBS 11 and response from SIAC and NTAA (and involvement from the National Electronic Security Alliance (NESA) and the TBFAA), however, Kunkle's proposal to the city council has been backed off. According to Martin, the recommendation has been rerouted to the city's Public Safety Committee, a group which is comprised of some council members, but which doesn't have the ordinance enacting power that the full council does.

To Martin, this represents a "de-escalation" of the situation.

"He [Kunkle] tells us that he's going to ask that the council refer it back to him," explains Martin. "He's got a lot of other things to deal with, and I think this is not something that he wanted to get into with the citizenship, and of course, we think it's a good decision to do that."

Even if the recommendation does make it to council, says Martin, the new state law may not make it so easy to become part of the city's code. The new law requires a public comment period, explains Martin, so alarm ordinance changes can get voiced in the community before they can be approved or disapproved.

As it stands now, the first time the Dallas Public Safety Committee can examine the chief's proposal will be August 15, since the group meets the first and third Monday of each month. That means that if the committee does recommend the proposal go before the council, the council wouldn't be able to look at it until August 16 at the very earliest. That changes any "high-speed" approach to passing an ordinance change, but it doesn't mean that the possibility of a non-response policy is dead in the water, and Russell says they're acting like it's still very much a possibility.

While the relationship with the city of Dallas has been positive in this instance, says Martin, the scenario isn't always this good in many municipalities.

"The industry is often demonized as rallying the customers and getting them upset," he explains, "but it's not us who is affected by these changes. We'll adjust to the laws if they require a guard verify the alarm or permits or fines, but the real losers are the citizens who often don't realize what's going to happen until it's too late."

Call For Entries

"Promoting Partnerships in Public Safety"

Security companies and law enforcement agencies work together as partners, sharing information and communicating frequently to protect public safety and serve their communities. The [Security Industry Alarm Coalition](#) (SIAC) and the [False Alarm Reduction Association](#) (FARA) have created the **POLICE DISPATCH QUALITY** program to promote cooperative best practices, to reduce unnecessary dispatches and give officers the most complete information when responding to alarms.



Examples of police department and security company cooperation are now being collected to help create best practices guidelines in the PDQ program **co-sponsored by Honeywell Security and Security Sales & Integration Magazine**. The best overall collaboration will be honored with the **North American PDQ Award for 2006**.

- A representative from the winning security company team will receive an all-expense paid trip to the awards ceremony in Las Vegas at ISC West on April 4, 2006.
- Monitoring and/or installing alarm dealers in the U.S. and Canada must mail an application postmarked by Dec. 1, 2005.
- Outstanding program ideas will be highlighted in Security Sales & Integration Magazine, in security association publications and their web sites and at ISC West in Las Vegas.
- Security companies and local police officials should meet now to form partnerships in public safety.

Download an application and the "Getting Started" Guide at www.siacinc.org or www.faraonline.org

Associations Partner On Alarm Data Exchange

By Jeffrey Sanders

VIENNA, Va.—The Central Station Alarm Association solidified a partnership with the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International that promises to improve emergency dispatches.

The APCO Standard for Alarm Data Exchange creates a protocol that will enable central stations to send confirmed alarm information directly to public service answering points.

"The intent of the partnership is to develop an interface for alarm companies to communicate directly with 911 centers electronically," said Pam Petrow, executive vice president at Vector Security.

Working with APCO, a not-for-profit organization focused on the enhancement of public safety communications, the CSAA will help coordinate research and development of the standard.

"This is the Holy Grail that everyone said would be great to have," said Steve Doyle, executive vice president at CSAA. Doyle expects the standard to reduce the amount of time it takes for emergency operators to receive alarm information and the possibility of the wrong information being shared.

Doyle estimates it now takes anywhere from three to five minutes for an operator to read the alarm information from his computer to a dispatch operator. With this standard, it will take seconds to transmit all the information that the central station has on file.

The CSAA organized three test groups that will integrate and beta test the system. The first group started work this past spring and is comprised of Monitoring Automation Systems, Vector Security and the emergency dispatch centers in Richmond, Va., and York County in Virginia.

"This will take a long time to be implemented," said Ed Bonifas, vice president at Alarm Detection Systems. "But if everybody has it today, it would make everyone's lives easier, it would make dispatches immediate."

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Featured Bulletin- Are You Ready for Vacation?

You've been counting the days until it is time to leave. Are you certain that you haven't forgotten anything you need to do to ensure your home is secure and running smoothly while you are gone?

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



Colorado County Considers Enhanced Call Verification

Aug 03, 2005, FORT COLLINS, Colo. -- A county in Colorado is considering a new alarm policy that includes a form of enhanced call verification (ECV). The Board of Commissioners in Larimer County, Colo., will soon vote on a new alarm ordinance where deputies will respond to burglar alarms only after the alarm company makes two attempts to call the alarm owner and verify the alarm.

The proposal, to be voted on by the board on Aug. 22, also makes alarm registration mandatory and sets up a fine system for false alarms, according to the *Daily Reporter-Herald*. Larimer County, just north of Denver, includes the cities of Fort Collins and Loveland. However, the police department in Loveland already has a limited verified response policy — where all alarms must be verified, though alarms are still broadcast and officers have the option to respond to unverified calls. That policy will remain in place.

Alarm owners would have to pay an initial registration fee of \$50 with an annual \$25 renewal. After a "free" first false alarm, a fee of \$50 will be assessed for a second false alarm in a year, \$75 for a third, \$100 for a fourth and \$500 for each false alarm thereafter.

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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:

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10024 Vanderbilt Circle, Unit 4
Rockville, MD 20850
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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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