

FARA InfoLink

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FARA Looking For Board and Committee Chair Volunteers

The FARA Board of Directors is still looking for a public safety member to step into the Vice President-Electronic Security position, which was vacated when Jim Cogswell assumed the Presidency. If you are interested in serving on the Board in this capacity, please contact President Cogswell directly at 913/642-5555 ext. 280 or via email at jimc@leawood.org. Duties of this position include representing public safety interests regarding electronic security by attending Board meetings, serving on a committee, and making suggestions on how to better serve public safety needs.

Various FARA committees are also desperately seeking people to take over leadership roles. Specifically, the Associate, Fire, Membership and Ways and Means committees are all looking for people to chair or co-chair their activities. Experienced board members are assigned to mentor and provide help for each committee. A good core group of people exists on most of these committees, and all they lack is someone to lead them. Are you that person? Please contact President Cogswell directly at 913/642-5555 ext. 280 or via email at jimc@leawood.org if you are interested in serving the association as a committee chair or co-chair.

FARA/SIAC/SSI Announce 2008 PDQ Winner

FARA, in conjunction with the Security Industry Alarm Coalition and *Security Sales and Integration* magazine, awarded Alarm Detection Systems in Aurora, Illinois with the 3rd annual Police Dispatch Quality (PDQ) Award. The PDQ program seeks to raise the bar for recognizing comprehensive false alarm reduction programs initiated by alarm companies. PDQ winners demonstrate their willingness to get involved through the implementation of false alarm reduction programs in their own companies and through the expenditure of resources to have a positive impact on reducing false alarms to which law enforcement responds.



ADS was honored for its comprehensive in-house false alarm prevention program, which includes constant education of both its own employees, as well as its customers. ADS has embraced Enhanced Call Verification and requires it of all new accounts. They have false alarm prevention tips on their web site and their technicians leave FARA false alarm prevention tip bulletins with customers when they complete service calls. ADS employees are empowered to identify and take whatever means are necessary to reduce and/or eliminate false alarms including visiting customers on-site and switching out equipment when necessary. Alarm Detection Systems received their award at the kick-off to ISC West in Las Vegas. Congratulations to ADS on winning this prestigious award.

SC Deputy Killed While Responding To Alarm Call

South Carolina authorities are still searching for clues in the August 6th slaying of a sheriff's deputy in Colleton County, South Carolina. Roadblocks were set up in and around the town of Smoaks, where the body of Deputy Dennis Compton was found outside a home. Smoaks is just west of Interstate 95, about 70 miles northwest of Charleston.

Sheriff George Malone says the 39-year-old law officer had responded to an early morning alarm at a vacant house.

Compton's body was found early Wednesday August 6th by the **homeowner's** son. Compton, 39, had gone to the empty house after an alarm there went off.



Deputy Sheriff
Dennis Compton

A few minutes later, the homeowners' son — called to the home by the alarm company — used the slain deputy's radio to report Compton had been shot, Sheriff Malone said. Malone said it was unclear whether Compton fired his own weapon.

One arrested, others questioned in S.C. deputy death

Authorities arrested one man as a person of interest and were questioning at least two others as they searched for the killer of a Deputy Sheriff Dennis Compton, who was shot as he responded to an alarm at an empty house, but no charges have yet been filed.

Meanwhile, Colleton County Sheriff George Malone told The Post and Courier of Charleston two other people have been brought in for questioning. A Colleton County sheriff's official reached by The Associated Press would not give any other details.

Bloodhounds and a helicopter were used in the search. "If there's a way, God willing, we'll find him," Malone said during a Wednesday news conference in a neighborhood of small ranch homes near where the deputy died.

Compton, a married father, had worked for the sheriff's office for two years — first as a jailer and for the past 16 months as a deputy, Malone said. "Deputy Compton was an honorable man, he was a family man," said Malone, who called the deputy "one of the best officers I had."

Compton's cousin, who serves on the county SWAT team, said Compton grew up wanting to work in law enforcement and usually asked for extra assignments. "He couldn't wait to get into that patrol car," said Cpl. Anthony Buchanan, 40.

Buchanan said he was upset, not angry, at the person who killed his cousin, who had two children and two stepchildren.

"We carry guns for a living and this is a wicked world," Buchanan said. "Right will prevail. If they don't get caught now, they will get caught."

Neighbor Virginia Padgett, 66, said the woman who owns the house stays elsewhere several nights a week to care for elderly people.

Helping Fallen Officers Family

A non-profit police organization, Palmetto Cops, will be selling memorial T-Shirts, to benefit the family of fallen officer Dennis Compton. Compton was gunned down as he responded to a burglar alarm early Wednesday morning in Colleton County.

The shirts are \$15 each and all proceeds will go directly to the family during this difficult time.

For more information on the shirts, or to order on, go to this link... www.palmettocops.com/GIVE

Shirts are available in small, medium, large, extra large, 2XL, 3XL and 4XL. All shirts will ship through USPS Priority Mail.

Based on Information from: The Post and Courier, <http://www.charleston.net> and USA Today

States Target Sales Tactics of Utah Alarm Company - By Jens Dana, Deseret News - Aug. 3, 2008

State agencies across the United States have received repeated complaints claiming salespeople from one of Utah's largest security service companies engage in aggressive and deceitful practices to push their product.

The Maryland Attorney General's Office has received two complaints from customers of Provo-based APX Alarm Security Solutions Inc. — a company that recruits students from local universities to sell and install security systems each summer. Attorney general's office spokeswoman Raquel Guillory said the customers claimed the sales reps pushed them into contracting security services. Guillory said the attorney's office is currently mediating those cases.

Other agencies across the nation have received similar reports of APX Alarm salespeople using pushy sales tactics and deceitful practices. According to a letter from Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections director Boyd Petty, the Louisiana State Fire Marshal issued a cease and desist order to APX Alarm on June 27, stating the marshal has consumer complaints that indicate the company's business practices aren't on the level.

"It is ... alleged that APX Security Solution Inc. salespersons have engaged in false, misleading, or deceptive acts or practices in that the company's salespersons knowingly provided false information to prospective customers in order to secure the sale of security systems," Petty wrote.

APX Alarm spokesman Nathan Wilcox said they are meeting with officials in Louisiana to discuss the concerns. He disputes the letter's characterizations, saying some people tend to think a door-to-door salesperson is "pushy" if he or she merely knocks on the door. "I'm sure (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) gets the same complaints about missionaries," Wilcox said. "Or the Jehovah's Witnesses." APX Alarm recruits its estimated force of 3,500 employees from Brigham Young University, Utah Valley University, Brigham Young University-Idaho, the University of Utah and Weber State University, Wilcox said. Most of the salespeople are trying to earn money for school, he said, so it's natural for them to be eager and positive.

"The people who sell these alarm systems for our company — they're salespeople," Wilcox said. "They're going to be enthusiastic about what they're selling." Wilcox also denied allegations of shady business practices, saying they typically call newly signed customers to ask them about the salesperson they dealt with and to see if they understand and accept the terms of the agreement. "If someone signed up and felt like they were pressured into the contract, they can cancel it," he added.

But Maryland resident Betty Kline, 77, one of the individuals who filed complaint against APX Alarm, said it's not as easy as Wilcox described. In her case, the salesman came to her house late in the evening in June. Instead of going to the front door, the salesman approached her husband, Gaither, in the garage. Since Gaither, 82, has a hearing problem, he led the young man into the house, where Kline said she told him numerous times over the course of an hour long conversation they weren't interested. "I just told him, I don't know how many times, I could not afford the security system," she said. "But he just would not give up." Kline said she finally relented. "Basically, I just signed the paper to get rid of him," she said. When she tried to cancel service, which is permitted if done within three business days, she discovered the contract was dated May 29, but the salesman visited the Klines in June. Kline said she eventually received a \$2,300 bill from APX Alarm.

Alex Dunn, APX's chief operating officer, said they've reviewed the contracts the Klines signed and said they have irrefutable proof the contract wasn't backdated, and Kline tried to get out of the deal a month after the cut off day. "I think in an attempt to get out of our contract she's smearing our name," he said.

Similar allegations have been reported across the nation, including Georgia, Nevada, Louisiana and Maryland. According to local media, police in Georgia issued a warning to residents to be wary of aggressive alarm salespeople after he heard APX Alarm reps told customers there's no cost to sign up. But after signing up, the customers find they're being charged \$40 to \$50 a month. Other states have reported similar situations.

In Utah, the company has received 1,005 complaints in the past three years, according to the Utah Better Business Bureau, but 597 of those complaints have been resolved in the last year. Wilcox said the number total customers APX Alarm deals with, about 150,000 installations per year, outstrips the small number of grievances they receive.

"Any time you have that many customers ... you're gonna have some people who will not think that that's an appropriate way to do (business)," he said. "But we take all (complaints) seriously."

Kline said she's done dealing with APX Alarm and insists she won't pay for a service she neither wants nor needs. "I'm definitely not paying," she said. "I don't care what they do." If she could do it over again, Kline said she'd call the police. But the Utah Better Business Bureau offers less drastic advice on its Web site: "Don't be pressured into buying something you don't want or need."

APX Weathers Media Storm -*Security Systems News, By Martha Entwistle - 08.07.2008*

PROVO, Utah—APX Alarm executives expect to end the summer with north of 170,000 new accounts sold. That success may come at a price, however. The company's summer-sales model definitely generates large volumes of new accounts, but it has also generated a number of incidents involving APX sales people that have become fodder for local news outlets.

There have been some legitimate complaints and there are certainly issues to be resolved with what is largely a young and eager sales force, said APX Alarm COO Alex Dunn. However, much of what makes it into the press is misleading, exaggerated, or just plain wrong, Dunn said.

Take, for example, an August 3 Desert News story that leads with "state agencies across the U.S. have received repeated complaints that [APX] engages in aggressive and deceitful practices to push their product." This story was the basis of another AP story that ran in the Salt Lake Tribune, which said APX is "under fire in multiple states after allegations of pushy and deceitful sales tactics."

In fact, complaints have been filed in five states, but many of the issues have been resolved, Dunn said. Reports of APX backdating a contract in Maryland, for example, continue to be reported elsewhere despite the fact that the reporter who wrote the original story has since reported that Apx proved that the contract in question was not backdated.

In addition, reports have said that APX received a cease and desist order from the fire marshal in Louisiana. This is true, however, "while the fire marshal's office alleges that it has been doing an investigation of APX Alarm's accounts for nearly two months ... the fire marshal has not provided the basis for all of the allegations in the cease and desist order," Dunn said.

Looked at one by one, the errors in the news stories are small, but collectively, the number of negative stories damages APX's reputation, Dunn said.

The company, said Dunn, takes all of these complaints seriously and works hard with sales managers to deal with them quickly and appropriately. For example, following a complaint of sales people crossing a state line selling new systems, APX is implementing a new procedure in its contact management software whereby salespeople will not be able to sell systems in zip codes where that salesperson is not specifically licensed.

There has also been at least one very positive mention in the press: The company is happy to have recently received J.D. Power and Associates "Outstanding Customer Service Experience" recognition, an honor it just announced Aug. 4. "It's important because it's outside verification by an independent third party of the fact that we really do focus on providing premier customer service," Dunn said.

And no one can argue with the sales numbers, which Dunn expects to reach between 185,000 and 190,000 for 2008. "We're the most proud and happy that 185,000 more families are being protected. That's the service we provide everyday as a security company, saving lives and protecting homes."

Man Upset Over Policy After Run-In With Burglar- *8.2.08- The Palestine Herald*

Palestine, TX - Daniel Bowman considers himself to be a lucky man, and an angry one.

Bowman, whose wife owns El Natural Bakery and Deli at 1900 W. Oak St., found himself Friday morning in the middle of a struggle with a would-be burglar and with City Hall over an alarm policy.

The alarm company for the bakery called **about 5:55 a.m. Friday with the news that the shop's back door appeared to be open and that when it contacted the Palestine Police Department, it was told that the police would not be responding because the Bowmans had not registered the alarm with the city.** So Bowman quickly dressed, jumped in his pickup and drove to town, arriving about 15 minutes after the alarm company had called. As he approached the bakery, he could see the back door swung open, he said, so he parked on the side and walked in, expecting the **building to be empty by now. It wasn't.**

Instead, Bowman surprised a man behind the counter where the cash register normally sat, **clutching \$25 in his hand. "We don't keep money in the store at night but we had a late sale, so there was \$25," Bowman explained.**

For an instant, time seemed to stop long enough for Bowman to size the man up and realize he had no weapon and was slightly smaller than the 62-year-old Bowman. So instead of allowing the man to flee, Bowman said he stepped forward, determined that the man was not leaving. He tried to pin the man down and call 9-1-1 but the man knocked the phone out of his hand, sending the batteries flying one direction and the handset another.

When the man tried to flee to the door, Bowman pulled it closed and shoved the padlock in place, locking both men inside. The struggle continued until Bowman pushed the man to the floor near another phone and was able to dial police to tell them what was happening.

Three squad cars arrived within two minutes, he said, and took the man, identified as 30-year-old Carlos Cesar Vidal, into custody, charging him with robbery and interfering with an emergency phone call, and also with burglary of a building at the Taqueria Mexicano Grill nearby on Palestine Avenue, where a 42-inch television set was reported missing by owner George Hernandez. He considers himself to be a lucky man, Bowman said, since he escaped the encounter sore but **unharmd. It's the alarm policy more than the attempted burglary which has left him fuming.**

Since Jan. 1, the City of Palestine has required commercial businesses to purchase a \$10 annual permit to register their alarm systems with the police department as a way to reduce the number of false alarm calls police were receiving. In a story published Dec. 15, 2007, police chief Larry Coutorie and Det. Nick Webb explained that the department had responded to hundreds of false alarm calls from local businesses, taking officers off the street while they responded, checked the building and tried to reach a keyholder to come turn off the alarm. Police would no longer respond to alarm calls from commercial businesses which did not purchase the permit.

However, the Bowmans were unaware of the policy since they had purchased their system only recently, Bowman said, and no one from the local alarm firm had mentioned the required permit. **"If I'd been a business where they'd been there 10 or 15 times on false alarms, I wouldn't be here (to complain)," Bowman said. "That's not the case. We're very careful on that. We understand that crying wolf is a terrible thing."** He made it clear that he puts no blame on the police for following procedure, and added that the officers who did respond to his phone call were professional and courteous.

Instead, Bowman said he thinks the ordinance should be changed to allow an officer to be sent the first time an unregistered business has an alarm call and that officers should have a permit form in their cars to give to business owners like himself, to either sign off that they are now aware of the requirement and plan to register their alarm or to sign that they refuse to do so.

"We sit and watch the news, we read the newspapers and we see our society and our culture fractured before our eyes with the violence and crime. It's not just here, it's everywhere," Bowman said. "The police we have a terrible job to do. They need our support. "But this kind of policy of non-responding only erodes the respect and support they need."

When asked about Bowman's situation, city manager Dale Brown said that the ordinance had not been written with the intent to keep police from responding to legitimate calls, only to reduce the high number of false alarms caused by setting the alarms to be too sensitive.

In addition, Brown said, the 9-1-1 tape of the conversation between the alarm company representative and the dispatcher apparently contained few details, other than the business' back door was open. **"The intent is not, obviously, to ignore situations like this when they happen," Brown said. "It would have helped to have had more information from the alarm company. "The intent of the alarm ordinance was that police were being called out hundreds of times for no reason." Instead, Bowman's idea for remedying the problem is something to think about, Brown said, as is the possibility of requiring alarm companies to notify customers. "It's a very good suggestion," Brown said. "We'll look at it."**

911 Systems Choking On Non-Emergency Calls- *8.5.08- By Alex Johnson, Reporter MSNBC –*

Pranksters, clueless callers block lines for legitimate crises.

Which of these is an emergency?

- A Subway sandwich shop in Florida leaves the mayo and mustard off a customer's order.
- A Texas man can't get a cab.
- A Tennessee man's stepfather keeps nagging him to do the laundry.

To hear callers to 911 emergency lines tell it, all are.

Eddie Mitchell, a 911 dispatcher in Rancho Cordova, Calif., near Sacramento, likes to tell the story of the caller who demanded to know why the Transportation Department hadn't mowed the grass. Another wanted to know how to use his cell phone.

"We've had people call in asking us to bring them milk," Mitchell said. Darrell DeBusk, a spokesman for the Knoxville, Tenn., police, can top that. "A few years ago, an individual called 911 wanting an officer to drive through McDonald's and bring him a hamburger," DeBusk said. Those calls may be funny, but in cities large and small, police officials and system administrators warn that 911 systems are being choked with clueless, frivolous, even prank, calls.

In California, for example, as many as 45 percent of the more than 8 million cell phone calls to 911 each year are for non-emergencies, officials said; in Sacramento, it could be as high as 80 percent. Those calls block the lines for callers who really need urgent help. **"You've got a true emergency with somebody out there — that there's a shooting or something — then those officers are not able to respond to that emergency call, because they're taking care" of callers who abuse 911 lines,** said Jennifer Wilson, who has worked in the 911 center in Knox County, Tenn., for 16 years.

'We're here for a purpose'

Officials say decades of education programs meant to emblazon the numbers 9, 1 and 1 in every American's memory may have worked too well. **Because police have to respond to almost every call in case it's a real emergency, people have figured out that a quick call to 911 guarantees action.**

Like Reginald Peterson.

Peterson ordered a Spicy Italian Sub at a Subway store in Jacksonville, Fla., last week. He ordered it with "the works." To his mind, it didn't come with the works. **"He tasted his sandwich, and it didn't have mayonnaise or mustard on it, so he became upset,"** said Tammy Morris, a manager at the store. Witnesses inside the store said Peterson started screaming. Then he went outside to call 911, asking for help in having his sandwich made to his satisfaction. A short time later, he called again to complain that police still hadn't shown up. So they did, and they arrested Peterson on charges of making false 911 calls. **"It's unbelievable what people get upset about now days,"** Morris said.

Or Like Kevin Waits.

Waits called a cab to his home in Waco, Texas. When it didn't show up, he called 911. The dispatcher told him to call a taxi service. Waco police Officer Steve Anderson said Waits grew more and more frustrated as he couldn't get a cab. **So he called 911 again. And again.** Eventually, he called 15 times. When police finally went to his apartment, they found a cab waiting for Waits — **who didn't have the \$26 fare.** Waits was charged with harassment and theft of service.

Or like the unidentified 19-year-old man who called 911 in Knoxville because his stepfather wouldn't stop nagging him to do the laundry or wash the dishes. According to the transcript of the call, the man told the operator: **"Why can't he be a grown man and do it himself instead of whine about it and pick and pack and fight about it?"** Wilson, the Knoxville dispatcher, said, **"I hate to use the term 'babysitter,' but we're here for a purpose, and that is not our purpose."**

27,000 Prank Calls to 911

It's especially galling when the caller is someone who obviously should know better. Take Gabe Pacheco, a lieutenant with the fire and rescue squad in Monroe County, Fla. Pacheco was put on paid administrative leave last month after he called 911 to report a non-existent boating accident. **The sheriff's report said Pacheco wanted to cover up the fact that he was going to be late for a shift change.** But the worst are the prank callers, who set out to tie up police and emergency resources for kicks.

In February, police in Hayward, Calif., arrested a man and charged him with making more than 27,000 phony 911 calls to Hayward police and the California Highway Patrol. He would grunt and make other sounds **described only as "bodily noises,"** mutter in a disguised voice and repeatedly press beep tones from the touchpad. **The caller, identified as John Triplette, 45, "completely overwhelmed our system,"** said Desi Calzada, manager of the Hayward Communications Center. **"He delayed the answering of other 911 calls because we were answering his."** According to police, Triplette said he made the calls **"because it's free."**

Don Aaron, a spokesman for the Nashville Metro police, said it's called "joyriding." "It's a joy call to 911," Aaron said. "What they don't understand is that the call takers at 911 take these calls very seriously. The police department takes them very seriously."

Some Jurisdictions Opt For Penalties

So seriously that authorities are moving to crack down. Last month, Ventura, Calif., began charging a per-incident fee for 911 calls. Residents can opt out of the charge by paying a recurring monthly fee, but if they **don't, every non-critical** call to 911 will cost them \$17.88. "We get a few kids that play on the phone," said Patty Chase, communications supervisor for Kern County Dispatch. "We get a few people that ask us strange questions, like when it's going to stop raining and things that we couldn't possibly answer." Some residents complained that the fee defeated the purpose of 911. "I can't believe that," said Salomon Olvera Jr. "It's really shocking to me. 911 is supposed to be an emergency phone number." Another opponent, James Courrangoiton, acknowledged that "they get a lot of crazy calls." But, he said, "there's got to be a better way of controlling that other than penalizing everybody."

Last month, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a law imposing a \$50 fine for a second non-emergency 911 call. Penalties rise to \$250 for the fourth call. "One warning is sufficient," said Assemblyman John Benoit, R-Palm Desert, who sponsored the bill. "This is not an appropriate use of 911. Don't do it again."

Featured Bulletin – Home Alarm Services 101

The FARA Communications Committee published a new bulletin that covers basic home alarm services. The bulletin is intended to give a broad overview of various types of alarm services that are available. The bulletin also recommends that alarm users visit the FARA web site for additional information on false alarm prevention.

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.

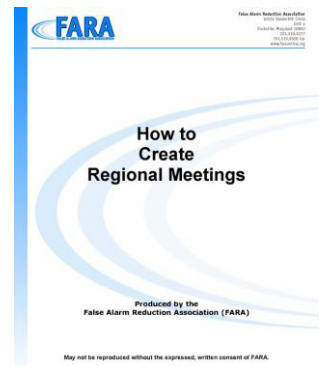
We encourage you to use these informational bulletins as bill stuffers, hand outs at meetings or to send to individual problem alarm users.



Featured Manual – How to Create Regional Meetings

Regional meetings between public safety and alarm industry professionals is an extremely valuable tool in addressing false alarm issues in your specific area and in fostering positive working relationships between the two groups. This newly updated manual provides you with an overview of what regional meetings are and why they are important. It also suggests various meeting topics designed to open lines of communication and provide education to public safety and alarm professionals alike.

The full list of manuals, which have been approved by the board, can be accessed on our web site at <http://www.faraonline.org/html/publications.asp>. Copies of manuals can be downloaded from the member's only site.



False Alarm Updates

- **Faulty Burglar Alarm Will Cost You-** [8.4.08- The Bridgeton News - NJ.com, NJ](#)
Bridgeton, NJ - The police department has begun enforcing an ordinance city council passed in February. A total of 43 property owners were mailed letters last week informing them that they had already exceeded the permissible limit of three false alarms, according to acting Police Chief Mark Ott. "We just now established a method of tracking it appropriately," Ott said of the delay in commencing enforcement of the false-alarm ordinance, also noting police have been busy working on a permit-parking system.
- **City Amends Alarm System And Fee Code -** [8.4.08- Deer Park Broadcaster & Progress, TX](#)
Deer Park, TX - An issue brought by a resident to the council led to an amendment of the Code of Ordinances. The city lowered the initial and renewal alarm fees for residences from \$50 to \$25 while it kept the fees for businesses at \$50. It also narrowed the definition of alarm system to exclude the systems that only provide medical monitoring services from the scope of the ordinance.
- **Fruitland Council Orders False Alarm Ordinance-** [8.3.08- Ontario Argus Observer, OR](#)
Fruitland, OR- The City Council is having a false alarm ordinance drafted by its attorney regarding false alarms and fees for false alarms the city responds to each month. The ordinance is directed mainly toward nonresidential uses, such as businesses and will define what a legitimate alarm is. A public hearing will be held aimed at explaining the intentions of the ordinance.
- **Council Tables Fire Ordinance a Second Time-** [8.6.08- Wetzel Chronicle, WV](#)
New Martinsville, WV- The first reading of an ordinance to deal with false fire alarms and nuisance fire alarms was tabled at the motion of New Martinsville Councilman Keith Nelsen. The ordinance would impose fines after repeated false fire calls due to faulty alarm systems. "I just think it's the wrong thing to do. That's what you're supposed to do," Nelsen told Couch. "You're supposed to respond." The fire chief said his department does respond to all calls, but said the ordinance with its accompanying fines "would encourage them to keep their alarm systems in repair." "I think it would encourage them to turn them off," rebutted Nelsen. "Responsible companies will keep them in good repair and irresponsible companies will pay," said Corliss.
- **Committee Attempts to Perfect False Alarm Law-** [8.7.08- Starkville Daily News, MS](#)
Starkville Mississippi's false alarm ordinance will likely be modified after much discussion among city officials. The committee approved a recommendation to cut the current fines in half, update the "false alarm" definition so that it clearly states that the alarm user won't be fined for circumstances not reasonably under their control and to give a hearing officer increased options to direct that written corrective action plans and or that false alarm prevention classes be utilized instead of fines. The draft of the revised ordinance can be found in its entirety on the city's Web site at <http://www.cityofstarkville.org>.
- **SB Rejects Ordinance To Fine Residents After First False Alarm -** [7.31.08- North Brunswick Sentinel, NY](#)
South Brunswick, NY — The Township Council unanimously rejected an ordinance that would have increased the fines for residents and businesses for false alarms from their security systems. The council members said that, although the intent of the ordinance was correct, the fines were too excessive and it put too much of a burden on the citizens and businesses of the town. They also received various e-mails and letters from a concerned public about the ordinance. Under the current law, a homeowner cannot be fined until the sixth false alarm. The new ordinance would have allowed fines to occur after the first offense. It also would have allowed for the first fine to be waived if an online program was completed, teaching the person how to use his or her alarm system.

- **California Town Gets Tough On False Alarms-** [7.24.08- Pasadena Star-News, CA](#)
ARCADIA, CA - Alarm system users will be required to pay a \$40 annual permit fee and face stricter fines for false alarms. The City Council voted 3-2 last week to set the annual fee. Council members also reduced the grace period from three to two false alarms per year and raised penalties for all subsequent false alarms. The city now will charge \$100 for a third false burglar alarm in a 365-day period, \$200 for a fourth, and \$300 thereafter.
 - **Florida County Increases In Alarm Registration, Renewal Fees** - [7.22.08- Palm Beach Post, FL](#)
West Palm Beach, FL — Palm Beach County commissioners tentatively signed off on a plan to increase the fees the county charges residents who have burglar alarms in their homes. The commission agreed to raise the annual fee to renew an alarm permit to \$25, up from \$5. The fee to apply for a new alarm system will increase from \$18 to \$25. Many other governments, including West Palm Beach, Coral Springs and Martin County already charge \$25 for the renewal permit. Boynton Beach and Indian River County charge \$30.
 - **Verified Response May Be Sought By Columbus, Ohio** - [7.1.08- Columbus Dispatch, OH](#)
Safety Director Mitchell Brown offered recommendations to control overtime, including requiring security companies to verify that a crime is taking place before responding to alarms, an end to non-mandatory training for firefighters and a change in paramedics' scheduling.
 - **Chronic False Alarms Will Cost: City Council Sets Fees For Repeat Offenders.**
[7.4.08-Los Banos Enterprise, CA](#) --The Los Banos, CA police and fire departments have been given permission to fine home and business owners whose security systems produce chronic false alarms. The new law requires alarm system owners to register the devices with the police every two years and pay an escalating fine for each false alarm police respond to after the third such incident. There is a fee of \$25 the first time the alarm is registered.
 - **Pennsylvania Town Orders Fees For False Fire Alarms- Johnstown Tired Of Wasted Fuel, Firefighters' Time-** [7/11/08- SecurityInfoWatch.com](#) -
The city council in Johnstown, Pa., approved an ordinance that would require alarm owners to pay a fee for false fire alarms. Under the ordinance, home and business owners will be given a limit of three false alarms a years, after which they will be required to pay \$50 and \$150 respectively for any subsequent violations. New alarm system owners will be given a two-week grace period to work out any kinks in their systems before violations would begin to be counted against them.
 - **Virginia Beach Increases Fines For False Alarms** - [7.16.08- SecurityInfoWatch.com](#)
Increases set to take effect early next year. To combat what police call a "colossal waste of energy," the City Council has raised fines for false alarms from \$25 to \$150-\$250. The city also is considering requiring all alarm owners to obtain a \$10 permit to register with police.
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Crime News Briefs

- **Chief: Home alarm led Bronxville cops to young suspects-** [8.4.08- The Journal News, NY](#)
Bronxville - A sounding alarm led police to an attempted burglary that has four teens facing felony charges in connection with a string of break-ins at six village homes.
- **Alleged burglary ring busted in south Utah County** - [8.4.08- Deseret Morning News, UT](#)
Three people suspected of a string of burglaries in south Utah County were arrested Saturday after police were alerted by a tripped alarm at a local credit union.
- **Five-time felon arrested for restaurant break-in-** [8.5.08- Mid-Hudson News, NY](#)
Town Police in New Windsor, NY have arrested a man with an extensive criminal past for allegedly breaking into Schlesinger's Restaurant on Route 300. Police were dispatched to a burglar alarm at a restaurant at around 4 a.m. They spotted a vehicle in an alley behind the building, registered to the man, and while they checked the rear of the building, they heard noises coming from the fenced in rear part of the building and inside. Two K-9 units

were dispatched and it was determined the suspect had run out the front door and into woods. A short time later, the man was spotted emerging from the woods, sweating profusely. He told police his car had overheated and he was looking for a gas station, but he later admitted to the burglary. A K-9 unit was able to locate the tools he used to break into the business.

- **Alarm check leads to cleaning lady's arrest** - [8.5.08- The Northwest Florida Daily News, FL](#)
Police encountered the suspect during a security check for an alarm at a Crestview, FL business the suspect was contracted to clean. The suspect's information was placed into the call and the active warrant was discovered and the suspect was charged with grand theft.
- **Man Caught Hiding In Tree After Chase** - [8.4.08- WXII-TV Winston-Salem, NC](#)
Greensboro, NC -- An officer who was responding to an alarm at an Elementary School spotted a man running from the building. Officers told the suspect to stop but he refused, then scaled a fence and ran across the road. That's when a K-9 officer found him hiding in a tree. He was arrested and charged with breaking and entering, larceny, resisting arrest, possession of drug paraphernalia and breaking into a coin-operated device.
- **Police: Store burglars caught** - [8.3.08- Times Leader, PA](#)
Pittston, PA – Two suspected burglars were caught with several musical instruments after they allegedly broke into B & C Music Studio and activated an alarm early Sunday morning, Pittston police said.
- **Perimeter Intrusion Detection System Helps Foil Copper Theft**
[7.21.08- www.secprodonline.com](#)- An attempt to steal valuable copper tubing from a Los Angeles-area oil refinery was thwarted when the robbers set off an alarm.
- **Police find shooting victim while investigating burglar alarm in Texas City**
[7.30.08- KHOU.com](#) - Texas City, TX - Police investigating a shooting, initially went to a home after a homeowner said someone tried to break in. While they were there, they heard another alarm go off at a house down the street. Officers went to that home and found a man who had been shot several times. Police said that man doesn't live there, and they believe he set off the alarm when he was trying to get in and ask for help. The shooting victim was taken to the hospital in critical, but stable condition.

Alarm Company News Briefs

Brink's Home Security Wins First Line Of Defense Award From NBFAA [8.1.08- Security Products](#)

On May 7, 2007, Julie Bender of Orlando, Fla., spent her morning at gunpoint. Awakened at approximately 4:45 a.m. by noises at her front door, she went to investigate and saw someone breaking through her front door with a sledge hammer. Running into her bedroom, she pressed the panic button on her Brink's Home Security alarm keypad, and, phone in hand, locked herself in her bathroom while attempting to call 911.

Brink's Monitoring Operator, Dianne Robinson, received the panic signal and called Julie's home. Receiving no answer, Robinson immediately requested a dispatch from the Orange County Sheriff's Department.

Julie's assailant eventually broke through the bedroom door, identified himself as her ex-boyfriend, and demanded she open the bathroom door. Afraid he might try to shoot through the door, Julie complied. Her ex-boyfriend pointed the gun at her chest and demanded she turn off the alarm. "I was afraid he was going to kill me. I begged him not to shoot me," she said in the police report. "He yelled at me to turn off the alarm and again I refused. He kept the gun pointed at my chest and yelled at me to turn off the alarm."

Knowing that her alarm system was her first and only line of defense, Julie entered the wrong code, pretending she couldn't turn it off. "He pointed the gun at me and ordered me to sit on the bed," Julie said. "I refused. I was begging him not to hurt me, and he said he wasn't going to hurt me, but he was going to kill himself."

The phone rang and her ex-boyfriend told her to answer it and say she was alright. It was the police, who asked Julie a series of yes and no questions that let them know she was in danger without raising the suspicions of her ex-boyfriend. They told Julie they were already at her home.

Julie begged her ex-boyfriend to let her go but he refused, so she began stalling by talking about their relationship and why they had broken up. "He was agitated and angry and kept saying that he couldn't live without me, that he wasn't going to kill me, but he was going to shoot himself in the chest," she said. Then, just as quickly as she was taken hostage, he let her go while he remained barricaded in the home.

The police continued to negotiate with him, attempting to arrest him peacefully but he continued to threaten to kill himself. Nearly three hours later, a single gunshot was heard. SWAT entered the house and found Julie's ex-boyfriend dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head. If not for the Brink's Home Security System, the outcome of this terrible morning might have been completely different. The immediate response of the Brink's Monitoring Operator allowed police to arrive on the scene in mere minutes after the initial panic signal.

Because of their quick response, Brink's Home Security was awarded the First Line of Defense Award from the National Burglar & Fire Alarm Association.

"The quick action of Julie in hitting the panic button, and our operator in working with the police were critical in saving Julie's life. The fast response by the police made the difference in an extremely dangerous situation that in an instant could have turned out more tragically, said Carole Vanyo, Brink's Home Security senior vice president of customer operations.

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 law enforcement, the alarm industry and the alarm users.

Contact Us

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