



FARA Position Paper – Verified Response

FARA believes that when a “verified response” policy is considered, an open dialog between elected officials, law enforcement agencies, the alarm industry, and citizens should take place to explore the following considerations:

Public Safety

- Citizens install an alarm system to protect their property, families, and to provide peace of mind. They may view law enforcement response as an essential element of this public safety tool.
- False alarms detract from public safety by diverting resources and endangering responders who are lulled into a false sense that it will be another false alarm when a real crime occurs.
- Law enforcement has increased demand on its decreasing resources. This is especially true in areas of rapid population growth where demand for service may have outgrown the resources. Homeland Security concerns has added even more responsibility.
- The IACP - “Non-Sworn Responder Guidelines” should be used as a baseline for qualifying private responders to include:
 - Background Checks- Does your state require a criminal record background check?
 - Training- A private responder requires a significant amount of initial training and a commitment to consistent ongoing training to maintain skills, as well as account for changes in service needs, new laws, and response procedures.
 - Implementation Period- Adequate time should be allowed for private companies to staff to a level capable of handling the response load.

Legal

- It is suggested that a legal opinion be obtained during the exploration of solutions for your jurisdiction.

Impact

- Police departments adopting Verified Response have experienced a significant reduction in alarm responses.
- Private companies and responders have no obligation to service all areas of the community. High-risk areas with high crime rates may have to pay a higher rate or possibly not receive the service at all.
- Officers are no longer responding to unverified alarms.
- Studies have shown that 80% of false alarms are caused by 20% of alarm owners. Any false alarm reduction program should focus on dealing with chronic false alarms.
- The number of police officers can be reduced or existing officers can be redirected to other crime prevention or enforcement duties.
- The cost of private responders may unduly impact the elderly on fixed incomes and others who are economically disadvantaged.
- The burden of false alarm management is shifted to the alarm industry and the alarm user.
- Private response is not economically feasible in all areas of the country. Large geographic areas with low population density are unlikely to enable successful implementation of private patrol services.

Financial

- Municipal budgets are tight. Law enforcement is being asked to maximize resources like never before.
- Law enforcement agencies that recover costs for the first response may gain funding for maintaining a larger uniform patrol compliment.

Exploration of Alternatives

- The NBFAA/FARA Model Ordinance has been extremely effective in managing the alarm function when adopted and enforced by law enforcement.
- A full cost recovery can be achieved by the law enforcement agency by charging a fee for a permit registration and service fee or fine for chronic abusers which shall fully cover the costs of administration, enforcement and response.
- Outsourcing the administration of a false alarm reduction program can achieve the benefits of the alarm reduction program with minimal personnel costs for the law enforcement agencies.

Conclusion

FARA believes that communities have a right to enact whatever false alarm solution best meets its needs. FARA also believes that communities benefit from a full exploration, conducted in the open with all stakeholders as participants, of the advantages and disadvantages of verified response before such a policy is implemented. We realize that this process may not be as expedient as other options, but we feel it is always superior as communities seek their individual solutions to the false alarm problem.