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For a printer friendly version visit <http://faraonline.org/~newsletter/Dec2005/FARAInfolink12-05.pdf>

Happy Chrismakwanzukkah!

The FARA Board would like to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season and a wonderfully prosperous New Year!

We hope you are able to celebrate the holiday(s) of your choice with family and friends and are enjoy the Holidays and the New Year to the fullest.



Happy Holidays from: Norma Beaubien, Jim Cogswell, W. Rex Bell, John Moorhouse, Steve Heggemann, Amy Lobdell, Gerry Miller, Stan Hanson, Kathleen Schraufnagel and Brad Shipp.

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. 30, 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

If you know of alarm companies, which excel at reducing false alarms, have a high level of customer service and established good working relationships with area public safety agencies, contact them and strongly suggest that they apply for the first ever PDQ Award. Remember, applications must be postmarked no later than December 30, 2005. Let's help reward those alarm companies that go above and beyond and help to make our jobs easier and more productive.

Enhanced Call Verification Gains Speed

Enhanced Call Verification (ECV) is an alarm industry initiative, which has shown remarkably positive results in reducing the number of alarm dispatch requests that are made to public safety agencies, thereby reducing the number of false alarms to which officers respond. ECV requires that at least two telephone calls, made to different phone numbers, be placed by the monitoring station prior to requesting public safety dispatch in an effort to determine the validity of the alarm activation. The second phone number is usually the cell phone of a responsible party.

To date, the initiative has generally been voluntary in nature, with some alarm companies instituting ECV for their new customers and working to get existing customers to buy into ECV. The statistics have been so positive, however, that some states and municipalities are not waiting for all alarm companies to voluntarily perform ECV. The State of Virginia currently requires ECV for all accounts, but has an exclusion clause, should customers feel it is not in their best interest to utilize the two-call initiative. Boulder, Colorado has regulated mandatory ECV through policy and has seen a 60% reduction in false alarms over the past year. More states and municipalities are looking at mandatory ECV as a means to further reduce false alarms, which will increase officer safety and free up public safety personnel to respond to crime and engage in proactive crime prevention initiatives.

Protection One provided FARA with statistics on their efforts to employ ECV nationwide. Protection One began a phased approach on August 31, 2005 to implement ECV, and began with their Southeast region,

which includes Florida, Louisiana, Kentucky, Alabama, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Arkansas and Mississippi. Between August 31 and October 31, 2005, Protection One reports that they have achieved a reduction of 40.27% in their number of false dispatches. Patricia Novak, Agency Liaison/Permit Analyst for Protection One's Topeka, Kansas office, told the InfoLink, "I'm extremely happy with the results. It makes all the hours I've put into this project very worthwhile." Protection One has already started implementation of ECV in their Southwest region, and plans to bring on the rest of North America by April of 2006.

Communications Committee Update

The FARA Communications Committee has completed work on three new publications and forwarded them to the Board for final vote on December 20, 2005. Upon approval by the Board, a new one-page bulletin will be available on Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP), which describes some of the problems inherent with consumers utilizing the Internet for phone service as opposed to POTS (plain old telephone service) lines and how the VoIP interacts with alarm system control panels and their ability to communicate with the monitoring center upon alarm activation.

Also available will be a Model for Electronic Filing of Alarm System Registrations, which provides information on considerations when allowing permitting and/or registration on-line. The Model also provides recommended fields, along with length and format.

Finally, the Board will vote on an Executive Summary of the FARA/NBFAA Model Burglar Alarm Ordinance, which describes the main provisions of the model ordinance without all of the legalese that is contained in the model.

If anyone is interested in working on the Communications Committee, please contact FARA's Executive Director, Brad Shipp at 301/519-9237 or at bradshipp@4yoursolution.com.

Regional Alarm Coordinators Meetings Resume in Maryland

Regional meetings are an excellent way to keep in touch with various false alarm reduction initiatives that are being implemented in a given area. It also provides an opportunity for public safety false alarm professionals to discuss problem alarm users/alarm companies and develop strategies that will identify the problems and improve the false alarm rates for the entire region.

On October 20, 2005, Howard County, Maryland, hosted the first regional alarm coordinators meeting, which included representatives from both Maryland and Virginia. That meeting was followed up on November 30, 2005 in Montgomery County, Maryland. In just two short meetings, the regional alarm coordinators, and their very capable respective staffs, have accomplished three major items:

- Discussion of Enhanced Call Verification on a statewide basis for Maryland.
- Developed an alarm ordinance matrix to include the main provisions of all alarm ordinances in the region for use by both public safety and the alarm industry.
- Opened lines of communication with the Maryland Burglar and Fire Alarm Association and received excellent support on the ECV initiative.

There was immediate buy-in by all agencies represented that ECV was an excellent way to reduce false alarms and that requiring ECV on a statewide basis was preferable to each individual municipality enacting a provision on a local basis. The MBFAA was brought into discussion very early and provided immediate support of the initiative. Meetings have been scheduled with state legislators in early January to discuss the mandate.

In an effort to help educate the alarm industry, as well as local public safety agencies, it was determined that there was a real need to develop a matrix of all local alarm ordinances; i.e., which jurisdictions have them and what are the main provisions of each. Work has already commenced on putting together this matrix, which can then be disseminated to interested parties. Additionally, the MBFAA and the regional

coordinators discussed having a one-day mega-meeting/conference in the Spring of 2006, where we can discuss areas of mutual concern, educate everyone on state and local ordinances and network between public safety false alarm reduction professionals and alarm company representatives.

The regional meetings in Maryland have been a huge success, and FARA recommends that every region in North America strongly consider implementing regional meetings.

Dallas- Business Alarm Policy Tightened

Security officials must verify reason for call before police will respond

10:32 AM CST on Thursday, December 15, 2005

By **DAVE LEVINTHAL** / The Dallas Morning News

Your commercial burglar alarm may sound and sound, but don't expect Dallas police to come around.

By an 8-5 vote, the Dallas City Council approved a policy Wednesday that will require private security officials to verify the validity of a commercial alarm before police officers respond. Police will continue to respond to businesses' 911 calls and human-activated panic-button alarms.

The decision – which came after several months of debate, including heated exchanges Wednesday morning among council members – does not apply to residential burglar alarms. Police Chief David Kunkle, who strongly pushed for the change, said it will allow the department to give more attention to high-priority calls because more than 97 percent of alarm calls to which officers respond are false. The policy will be implemented incrementally beginning in February as commercial alarm permits expire. "I believe in the chief. This makes sense," Mayor Laura Miller said. "We just have an obsolete way of doing business," said Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Elba Garcia, citing false-alarm calls as Dallas' "single largest waste of police resources."

Alarm industry representatives contended that the change to a "verified-response" policy would embolden burglars and increase alarm-monitoring fees. "Verified response is no response," said Chris Russell, president of the North Texas Alarm Association. "I'm very disappointed in the city of Dallas. Some council members – they didn't listen to their citizens."

Dallas police responded to about 62,000 false alarms in 2004, officials said. Of those, about 32,000 were residential false alarms and 30,000 were commercial.

About a dozen people, some representing businesses and churches, implored the council Wednesday to reject the verified-response proposal. "My blood, sweat and tears are invested into my business," said Doug Wright, who owns Wright Studio, which specializes in commercial photography. "We cannot afford a security crisis."

Earlier, council member Maxine Thornton-Reese moved to defeat the verified-response agenda item. "Let the people know that we need the police. Let the people know that you love the people," Dr. Thornton-Reese said. "It's a terrible mistake. It sends a terrible message," council member Mitchell Rasansky said of the verified-response policy. But the council rejected Dr. Thornton-Reese's motion by an 8-5 vote. Members then voted 10-3 against an attempt by council member Ron Natinsky to delay the vote so the council could consider an amended proposal next month.

After Wednesday's vote, police will continue to respond to all activated residential alarms, though habitual false alarms will result in homeowners paying fines as high as state law allows. The fourth, fifth and sixth false alarm in a year will cost a user \$50 each. A seventh and eighth false alarm in a year will each cost \$75. Nine or more will each cost \$100, but beyond eight false alarms, the city may revoke a user's permit.

Ms. Miller vowed to lobby the Texas Legislature next year to allow either Dallas alone, or all larger municipalities, to increase maximum fines. The mayor added that the city must monitor the progress of commercial verified response. She also suggested that the council might consider extending the program to residential alarms if the commercial program is successful.

Earlier this year, the council considered a verified-response policy that included residential and commercial alarms. But during public hearings this autumn, an outcry from dozens of residential-alarm customers – some of whom offered grisly scenarios of burglars terrorizing homebound handicapped and elderly residents unable to activate their alarm-system panic buttons or dial 911 – prompted a compromise.

Council member Bill Blaydes said he wouldn't support a proposal that might result in unarmed security guards responding to burglar alarms, especially when burglars have wounded armed police across the nation.

It will be up to commercial-alarm users to decide what kind of private security agents – armed or unarmed – they want responding if their alarms activate. Armed responders probably will cost alarm users more, Mr. Russell said.

Council member Gary Griffith noted that an armed security force – not sworn Dallas police officers – protects City Hall and other city-owned facilities. If similar personnel respond to commercial burglar alarms, "I'm very comfortable with that," Mr. Griffith said. "We're putting ourselves in the same kind of system that we're doing for commercial businesses."

You Don't Have to Leave Your Heart to Enjoy San Francisco!

Fine food, plenty of sites, the finest training and prime networking all await you in San Francisco April 24 to 28, 2006. The training agenda has been completed and will include such topics as understanding alarm systems, working with the media, getting reductions in the real world, effective ordinance management and proactive alarm industry false alarm prevention steps, among others. The symposium registration packets were mailed to the membership in November and should already be in your hands. If not, the registration packet is also available on-line at FARA's web site. Don't get left out of this unique opportunity to learn how you can reduce false alarms in your community.

The International Training Symposium will be held at the world-famous Fisherman's Wharf. Our host hotel offers easy access to Pier 39, the Cannery, Harbor Cruises and Ghirardelli Square. Across from the Powell and Mason Cable Car Line, our downtown hotel is a mile from the bustling Union Square, the Financial District and Nob Hill. You can make your reservations on line directly from FARA's web page!

Visit our web site – <http://www.faraonline.org> for more information.

Featured Bulletin - Rearranging your Home Environment!

Moving furniture or buying something new?
Don't forget the impact it could have on your alarm system equipment.

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



on our

Real Hope for False Alarms

by Scott Goldfine

For many, the topic of false alarms has become about as fun and exciting as a trip to the dentist — and often just as painful. What's more, the long legacy and seeming inevitability of false alarms as well as the endless debate surrounding the issue has created a numbing effect not unlike a jaw full of Novocain®. But false alarms continue to decay the industry, and the only way to ensure the future health of installing and monitoring companies is to drill down deep to the root of the problem.

With increasing outcries from law enforcement as to the drain on resources caused by false alarms and more of them looking at or adopting verified response policies (verifying an alarm event prior to police dispatch), it is clearly time for alarm dealers to give the problem more than mere lip service. It has become imperative to examine the situation from all angles, extract the key causes, foster better communications and implement best practices that will give teeth to false alarm reduction programs.

To that end, Security Sales & Integration recently picked the brains of some of the finest minds in the realm of false alarm reduction to determine once and for all how the industry can stop the bleeding. This group includes leading figures from the alarm and law enforcement communities, as well as the heads of the foremost false alarm management associations. Those from the alarm industry include large national operators and established regional firms.

Bob Allen, president of Brink's Home Security; Norma Beaubien, director of Montgomery County (Md.) Police Department's False Alarm Reduction Section and president of the False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA); Robert Bonifas, president of Alarm Detection Systems Inc.; Tom Chronister, commander of Oxnard (Calif.) Police Department's Patrol Support Division; Michael Hanley, vice president of Customer Monitoring Centers for ADT Security Services Inc.; Stan Martin, executive director of the Security Industry Alarm Coalition (SIAC); and John Murphy, president of Vector Security, are all battle-tested veterans of the war on false alarms.

These experts offer their takes on verified response, enhanced call verification (two calls to alarm system owners prior to police dispatch), how the alarm industry and law enforcement can more effectively communicate and cooperate; the roles played by monitoring stations; larger dealers, end users, trade associations, equipment manufacturers and municipalities; as well as installation standards and training practices. Their incisive opinions will strike a nerve in those hungering for viable solutions.

Visit the Security Sales & Integration web site for the full article
http://www.securitysales.com/t_ci_articleView.cfm?aid=2186&sid=0

Ordinance Updates

PITTSBURGH: The city of Pittsburgh is increasing the fines for false alarms and will put them into effect on Jan. 1, according to the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. As part of the city's recently passed fiscal recovery plan, the number of "free" false alarms within a year without a fine is being reduced from three to two. From there, the fines rise from \$50 for a third false alarm within a year to \$500 for a ninth. Previously, the city had a uniform false alarm fine for each false call after a third of \$15 for residential alarm and \$50 for a commercial false alarm. The fines will now be the same for both residences and commercial establishments.

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. The city council in the Southern California city of San Bernardino is considering a different approach to the false alarm problem that doesn't involve verified response or fines: The city is considering hiring retired police officers who would specifically be tasked with responding to alarm calls. The *Press-Enterprise* reports the council is looking into a proposal from the city's administrator where at least eight retired officers would be hired to respond to residential and commercial alarms, leaving the rest of the city's police force to attend to other duties.

DURHAM, N.C.: The city's council has approved a new alarm ordinance that would institute an alarm permit process and fines for excessive false alarms. NBC 17 says there will now be a \$25 yearly alarm permit fee for all alarm owners in Durham and false alarm fines ranging from \$100 for a third false alarm within a year to \$300 for a 10th incident. The new fees take effect on Jan. 1.

Brink's Home Security Achieves One Million Customers

IRVING, Texas (November 5, 2005) – Brink's Home Security recognized its one-millionth customer on October 8, 2005.

Edward and Laurie Stolarz, who reside in the Boston metro area, were recognized as the one-millionth home security customer with the delivery of a \$10,000 check by Brink's Armored Truck on November 5, 2005. The money was donated in their name to the American Cancer Society. Additionally, to welcome the Stolarz family as a special customer, Brink's Home Security installed the security system and awarded over one million minutes of free system monitoring service (3 years free monitoring).

"It is our pleasure to welcome the Stolarz Family and recognize them as our one-millionth customer. We are also very pleased to donate \$10,000 on their behalf to the American Cancer Society," said Bob Allen, President, Brink's Home Security.

Vector Security's Murphy Tapped as New CSAA President

Nov 16, 2005, VIENNA, Va. -- John Murphy, the president of alarm service provider Vector Security, is the new president of the Central Station Alarm Association (CSAA). Murphy and the rest of CSAA's executive committee were elected to two-year terms during CSAA's 2005 Annual Meeting last month in Ko-olina, Oahu, Hawaii.

Murphy succeeds Dick Sampson, president of Arlington, Mass.' American Alarm and Communications Inc.

President of Mt. Laurel, N.J.'s Vector since 1991, Murphy says his aim during his term will be to create more value for CSAA members.

New Brink's Home Security Office Opens in Rhode Island

IRVING, Texas (November 29, 2005) – Brink's Home Security recently opened its fourth new branch office of the year. The new branch is located in Lincoln, Rhode Island, and will serve the Providence, R.I. metro area and surrounding community. Other new Brink's Home Security branch offices opened this year include: Orlando, Florida; Atlanta, Georgia; and Frederick, Maryland.

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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