
FARA 2004 Awards

2004 FARA Public Safety False Alarm Achievement Award

- Winner- Huntsville, AL
- Honorable Mention -
 - City of Bridgeport Alarm Administrator Program
 - Hempstead Police Department
 - Leawood Police Department
 - Miami-Dade Police Department
 - Montgomery County Police Department's False Alarm Reduction Section

2004 False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award:

- Winner - ADT

2004 FARA Achievement Award

- Winner - Alarm Association of Florida (AAF)

Detail descriptions for each award follow

FARA Award Nominations- 2004 Conference

Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award:

Description: Alarm reduction program has shown meaningful or significant reduction in number of false of alarms over a 3 to 5 year period.

Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award Winner

Huntsville, AL

Nominated By: Rex Bell, Huntsville, AL

Rationale: "HANDS ON IN HUNTSVILLE" (A CITY OF 170,000 IN THE HILLS OF NORTH ALABAMA)

November, 1996, Huntsville had about 5,450 alarm sites with no false alarm program. The Police were responding to better than 1,300 false alarms per month. With alarm system mass marketing starting in this market, steps needed to be taken and a False Alarm Ordinance was introduced and in full force by March, 1997.

The program is a "hands on" operation that is community oriented administered under the "Spirit of the Law" rather than under the "Letter of the Law". In the first 12 months over 800 alarm sites were personally visited, Appearances were made at all the civic clubs, business associations, schools, Senior Center and neighborhood centers. There was also media publicity where possible; the approach taken was "everyone must accept their responsibility as an alarm user".

Our alarm program does require the permitting/registering of all alarm sites. It requires the alarm companies and monitoring companies to register with the HPD, We have established policies regarding ethical selling proper installation, full review and explanation of the system to the alarm user and policies for the monitoring service to follow.

There has been a close working relationship with the members of the alarm industry from the beginning.

Classes for the alarm users are our primary enforcement program. We emphasize that every alarm user must "accept their responsibility as an alarm user", Our classes are a combination education and enforcement program that is user friendly. We conduct a monthly required class for alarm users with three or more nonexcused activations.

We also conduct "on site" classes for retailers, industry, financial institutions, churches, commercial sites, etc,, as well as, classes at Senior Centers, neighborhood civic centers, etc.

We make personal visits to problem sites; usually recommending upgrading of alarm systems. We also make visits to sites to help make suggestions for layout, etc, In addition, we are a mentor to other Jurisdictions in our area.

When one considers that this Jurisdiction put its alarm program into force with responding to over 1,300 false alarms a month from about 5,450 alarm sites and now in 2004 are responding to only 575 false alarms a month from some 18,000 alarm sites, we think our "hands on/community oriented program" of "it's everyone's responsibility to stop false alarms" is worth the effort and time put forth!

We have made mistakes but are learning from each and continuing to improve the program; yet keeping it "Community oriented".

Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award Honorable Mention

City of Bridgeport Alarm Administrator Program

Nominated By: Steve Pereira, Steve City of Bridgeport

Rationale: I am a member of FARA and the CBFAA in the State of Connecticut. I would like to share with you the great work that has been accomplished in the City of Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The City of Bridgeport has a population a daytime population of (approx) 185,000 (this number reflects a workforce commuting from outside the City) and an evening population of (approx) 140,000.

The Alarm Ordinance went into effect January 1, 2000, with the Alarm Coordinator on board by the middle of the month. The Alarm Administrator Program for the City of Bridgeport has been very successful in the

reduction of the number of false alarms over the past four year. The program has also brought an increase in revenue and accountability of alarm users as well as alarm companies.

Although there are actually many components that help to make this program effective and successful, the basic outline is a modified alarm model and the cooperation/collaboration of alarm companies and the CBFAA.

The bottom line is that the City of Bridgeport Alarm Administrator Program really works!

Summary of Bridgeport Annual Report

PURPOSE OF THE ALARM ORDINANCE (Section 8.12.030 of the Municipal Code)

The purpose of the Ordinance is to encourage alarm users and Alarm businesses to maintain operational reliability and properly use alarm systems and to reduce false alarm dispatch requests and, thereby, prevent the misuse of police resources. This Ordinance governs systems intended to summon police response, requires permits, establishes fees, provides for penalties for violations, establishes a system of administration, and sets conditions for suspension or loss of permits.

GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES OF THE ALARM ADMINISTRATOR

Administers, controls and reviews alarm applications, registration, fines, penalties and civil judgments in accordance with City of Bridgeport Ordinance, Section 8.12.030 of the Municipal Code, to reduce the number of false alarms in the City.

ILLUSTRATIVE DUTIES OF THE ALARM ADMINISTRATOR

- Register all burglar alarm systems
- Administer the False Alarm Component of the CAD System
- Maintains accurate alarm records
- Create and disseminate educational materials related to proper alarm maintenance and operation
- Works with alarm owners and monitoring businesses to resolve false alarm problems
- Initiates punitive actions (warnings, fines, penalties and civil judgments)
- Collects registration fees and fines
- Interfaces with Alarm Appeals Officer to provide support documentation for appeals

MISSION OF THE OFFICE OF THE ALARM ADMINISTRATOR

The implementation and enforcement the City of Bridgeport Alarm Ordinance in an effort to reduce false dispatches that includes, but is not limited to:

- The administration/collection of alarm registration forms and fees as well as delinquency and non-compliance fines;
- The referral of persistent delinquent and non-compliance cases to City Attorney;
- The chronicling and analysis of the negative effect of high numbers of false alarms on local law enforcement and the surrounding community;
- The execution of Alarm User Awareness Workshops and
- Consultation/recommendation of corrective actions to be taken by alarm companies, owners and users.

False Alarm Ordinance Information for the City of Bridgeport

The City of Bridgeport has had a False Alarm Ordinance as of January 2000

In the City of Bridgeport, only commercial alarm system must be registered with Alarm Administrator

Further, the alarm permit must be renewed annually (after 1 calendar year)

The permit fee to register a commercial alarm system in Bridgeport is \$10.00

The penalty fee schedule for false alarms in the City of Bridgeport is as follows:

1st	false dispatch free	6th	false dispatch \$50.00
2nd	false dispatch free	7th	false dispatch \$99.00
3rd	false dispatch free	8th	false dispatch \$99.00
4th	false dispatch \$50.00	9th	false dispatch \$99.00
5th	false dispatch \$50.00	10th	false dispatch \$99.00
		11th	false dispatch \$99.00

There is an additional charge for each false dispatch for failure to register alarm of \$99.00

The City of Bridgeport Police Department is responsible for billing.

- The alarm data source is CAD (computer automated Dispatch)
- Suspend/Restrict Police response (revoke permit) Yes*
- How many until response suspended? 10
- Accept cancellations? Yes
- Require verification? No, require attempt
- Response priority? High

*Restricted response not enforced at this time

Bridgeport Alarm Administrator Summary October - 2003

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	False Alarms From 1999 - Present
Reported False Alarms %	17%	22%	10.26%	8.1%	6.8%	6.18%	↓73%

- 31% of all Alarm Sites are Commercial
- 51% of all False Alarms Dispatch (FAD) are Commercial

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Total FAD (Commercial) %	3.71%	1.87%	1.78%	1.08%

- 69% of all Alarm Sites are Residential
- 46% of all False Alarms Dispatch (FAD) are Residential

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Total FAD (Residential) %	1.85%	.83%	.83%	.41%

	1997-1998	1998-1999	2000 (Projected)
Total FAD Increase (Commercial & Residential) %	9.9%	9.5%	↑10%

	1997	1998	1999	Projected Cost w/o Alarm Administrator Unit (AAU)	Actual Police Dept. Time Cost for FAD 2002
Police Department Time Cost for FAD	\$563,635.00	\$567,270.00	\$596,317.50	\$652,967.66	\$338,368.00

- We have identified 161 alarm company's doing business in Bridgeport
- AAU has conducted 19 Alarm Users Awareness Classes, with over 235 alarm users attending
- Evaluation showed that 95% of attendees found the class very useful and informative
- 255+ sites visit consultations and corrective action recommendations
- We have collected \$269,417.00 in fines and registration

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Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award Honorable Mention

Hempstead Police Department

Nominated by: Thomas J. Durnan, Hempstead Police Department

Rationale: In early 2000, I was assigned to start up a program to monitor the false alarms within our Village of Hempstead, where I have been a police officer for the last 25 years. After putting all the alarm events into a separate database in the current dispatch system, I was able to follow the alarm activity. I started out by sending violation letters, making phone calls, etc. This had little if no effect. I then began enforcing the village ordinance which states that more than 4 false alarms in a calendar year is a violation. This of course was an ongoing process but it did have a positive effect. The reduction of false alarms began.

From the False Alarm Statistics I have attached, you can see that since the peak year of 1999, the number of false alarms annually has been reduced by 50%.

	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001		2002		2003	
	Monthly	Y.T.D.	Monthly	Y.T.D.	Monthly	Y.T.D.	Monthly	Y.T.D.	Monthly	Y.T.D.	Monthly	Y.T.D.	Monthly	Y.T.D.
Jan	514	514	466	466	536	536	665	665	298	298	297	297	303	303
Feb	400	914	415	881	427	963	451	1116	292	590	251	548	230	533
Mar	476	1390	474	1355	508	1471	414	1530	376	966	299	847	274	807
Apr	485	1875	460	1815	433	1904	428	1958	301	1267	288	1135	212	1019
May	414	2289	475	2290	481	2385	326	2284	289	1556	324	1459	222	1241
Jun	481	2770	500	2790	530	2915	383	2667	323	1879	268	1727	235	1476
Jul	529	3299	566	3356	604	3519	367	3034	322	2201	330	2057	266	1742
Aug	528	3827	571	3927	580	4099	366	3400	369	2570	329	2386	231	1973
Sep	464	4291	542	4469	535	4634	335	3735	330	2900	275	2661	258	2231
Oct	480	4771	489	4958	502	5136	397	4132	271	3171	281	2942	283	2514
Nov	559	5330	514	5472	474	5610	472	4604	259	3430	289	3231	307	2821
Dec	572	5902	520	5992	600	6210	467	5071	332	3762	290	3521	257	3078

Yearly Total # of Alarms	5981	6124	6334	5979	4452	4066	3728
Yearly Total False Alarms	5902	5992	6210	5071	3762	3521	3078

Change from Previous Year		+92	1.5%	+218	3.6%	-1139	-18%	-1309	-26%	-241	-6.4%	-443	-12%
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I still make a significant number of phone calls to residents and businesses to make the alarm users more aware of what is going on. I initiated a "Warning Card" being issued by the responding officers to every false alarm. This is printed on bright yellow stock and provides a notification to the alarm user that the police have been there and also informs them of the law. (see below)

I attended a FARA Conference in New Orleans in 2003. I became certified as an Alarm Manager. I believe that was the title of the certification.

Back in July of 2003, I formed a committee to establish a more comprehensive alarm ordinance for our village. This committee consisted of myself, a member from the Chamber of Commerce, the president of the Civic Associations, and a member of the Local Alarm Association. We spent many hours exchanging ideas, while having the FARA Burglar Alarm Ordinance as a document to work from. This was extremely helpful and we did make many modifications. I have attached a copy of our version.

I also made inquiries to the central stations which we deal with to survey the number of alarm users we have within the Inv. Village of Hempstead. This gave us a picture of what our exposure is with regards to the number of alarm sites. I have submitted this very comprehensive alarm ordinance to the Mayor and Board of Trustees for a public hearing. This proposal would include the requirements for alarm permits, which we never had. It also includes prevention measures to help reduce the growing number of false alarms. Our current ordinance is about 4 sentences in length, and not much to work with.

I have also attached a listing of the reasons for our proposal. We are still awaiting another public hearing to finalize the local law.

I truly feel that the initiatives which I have taken, have had a tremendous impact on our Police Response to false alarms and to future policies where by alarm users in our municipality will have more accountability. This is an uphill battle, but we are off to a great start.

In light of my performance as described above, I respectfully request to be considered for your "Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award."

HEMPSTEAD POLICE DEPARTMENT
WARNING NOTICE
Violation(s) of Village Code of Ordinances

Alarm Malfunction / Human Error

Alarm audible more than thirty (30) minutes

On _____, 20__ at _____ A.M. P.M.

The Hempstead Police responded to an alarm notification at the below address:

_____, Hempstead, N.Y.

REMARKS: _____

To avoid receiving a summons, please ensure that your alarm system is operating properly and occupants/employees are familiar with its operation.

“It’s The Law”

False alarm dispatch means an Alarm Dispatch Request to the police department, when the responding officer finds no evidence of a criminal offense or attempted criminal offense after having completed a timely investigation of the Alarm Site.

Section 95-8.3, Subdivision O(2) of the Code of Ordinance of the Incorporated Village of Hempstead prohibits the transmission of more than four (4) false alarms during any calendar year that are received by the Police Department or Fire Department. Violations of this section are punishable by summons and possible fines of between \$500.00 and \$1500.00.

Also, as per our Village Code of Ordinances, an audible alarm system shall automatically discontinue emitting an audible sound no longer than 30 minutes after it is activated.

False Alarms jeopardize the Public and the Police.

Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award Honorable Mention

Leawood Police Department

Nominated By: Jim Cogswell, Leawood Police Department

Rationale: Since the inception of the FARP here in 1995, the number of systems in the city has grown 30% (3,156 to 4,450) while the number of false alarms has dropped from 35% of dispatched calls to just under 10%. The False Alarm Rate has fallen from 1.20 in 1995 to .506 at the end of 2003.

This has been achieved with the efforts of the City Council in passing an effective ordinance, the on-going support of the Police and Fire chiefs and the cooperative efforts of the entire staff of dispatchers and officers. And it appears that the trend is continuing.

Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award Honorable Mention

Miami-Dade Police Department

Nominated By: Patty Bimonte, Miami-Dade Police Department

Rationale: On January 1, 2002, Miami-Dade County Ordinance 21-276 became effective. This Ordinance requires all residences and businesses within unincorporated Miami-Dade County to register their working burglar alarm systems with the Miami-Dade police Department (MDPD) and to pay a \$25 registration fee. The Ordinance also provides for accruing penalties for violations. Lieutenant Garrison and Sergeant Bimonte were both assigned to the FAEU shortly before the Ordinance went into effect, and were charged with the administration and enforcement of the Ordinance.

Alarm legislation was adopted because of concerns over law enforcement safety and to eliminate the misuse of their resources. MDPD immediately recognized the need for strict enforcement of the Ordinance as well as a need for education of citizens concerning the ramifications of false burglar alarm activations. False alarm calls had steadily been rising in Miami-Dade County for a number of years. In 2001, MDPD officers responded to 130,485 burglar alarm calls. Of those, approximately 98% were false signals. During the past two years MDPD false alarm dispatches have been reduced by 37%, to a total of 81,240 calls in 2003. This reduction has saved the MDPD over \$2.4 million in revenue and almost 25,000 man-hours by not responding to nuisance calls.

The primary commitment of the FAEU is to reduce the number of false alarms the MDPD responds to so that officers can concentrate on higher priority calls for service. Lieutenant Garrison and Sergeant Bimonte educate the citizens of Miami-Dade County at Citizen Advisory Committee and homeowners association meetings. Additionally, a MDPD FAEU web page was designed through which citizens can download educational information and the annual registration card. Through such education the number of false alarms in Miami-Dade County has been and will continue to be reduced. The supervisors also proposed the formation of a "Burglar Alarm Response Squad" and were granted a Law Enforcement Trust Fund Grant to begin this pilot project. The program operated with a multi-prong effort, with the focus being a squad of four officers who would respond only to burglar alarm calls. Special rolls call training was given to the officers assigned to the detail, with the emphasis on speedier dispatch and response to alarm calls, education of citizens, and swifter response time to other calls for service by other district officers. The officers who attended these roll calls were equipped with informational brochures and the knowledge to instruct citizens on how to reduce the number of false incidents. They were also given a list of "most frequent offenders" within their areas, and instructed to make efforts to contact these citizens to offer educational information concerning false alarm reduction during times when there were no alarm calls. During the sixteen weeks that the detail operated, the number of false burglar alarm calls in the pilot area was decreased by 18% over the same time period in the previous year. More importantly, the project fostered positive citizen reaction on several levels: The response time for burglar alarm calls was reduced and response time for other calls for service was also reduced. The education received by citizens on ways to reduce the number of false alarms benefited both the Department and the community.

Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award Honorable Mention

Montgomery County Police Department's False Alarm Reduction Section

Nominated By: Norma Beaubien, Montgomery County Police Department

Rationale: The Montgomery County Police Department's False Alarm Reduction Section respectfully submits the following for consideration of the FARA's Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award, which recognizes a program that has shown meaningful or significant reduction in the number of false alarms over a three to five year period.

Under its current alarm ordinance structure, which has been in effect since 1994, and was fully enforced beginning in March 1995, the MCPD's FARS has reduced the number of false alarms to which police officers must respond by 49.9%. This reduction has been achieved even while the total number of alarm users has increased in the same time period by 123%. Calendar year 2003 statistics show that the residential dispatch rate is .23, the commercial dispatch rate is .88 and the combined rate is .32, an all-time low for MCPD.

Each year, more and more alarm users have no false alarms at all. In 2003, 79.4% or 52,762 alarm users had no false alarms. This statistic, which is supported by the low false dispatch rate, is a measure of the success of the overall program. In 2003 alone, the FARS saved \$1,928,790 in patrol costs, which equates to 14,301 hours and 13.75 actual work years.

In addition to enforcing the mandates of Montgomery County's alarm ordinance, FARS staff also engage in other false alarm reduction initiatives, such as the "major offender project" which identifies those alarm users who are experiencing problems and meeting with them and their alarm companies to help identify the exact cause of the problem and to suggest solutions. This has been a highly effective program for the FARS and has been incorporated into our annual goals and objectives plan.

Since Montgomery County has shown significant and meaningful reduction in the number of false alarms to which police officers must respond – and has shown further reductions year after year, the FARS respectfully requests consideration for the Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award. Should you require additional statistical information, I would be happy to supply you with a copy of the FARS 2003 annual report. Thank you.

Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award

Description: Alarm reduction program has shown meaningful or significant reduction in number of false of alarms over a 3 to 5 year period.

Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award Winner

ADT

Nominated By: Jim Cogswell, Leawood Police Department

Rationale: Their use of the 2 call verification has resulted in significant drop in false alarms for their customers in this area and I would have to assume that it holds true nationwide. For Leawood, their False Alarm Rate dropped 27% from .610 to .450. If this has held true nationwide with their 6 million customers, it means 1 million less false alarms that public safety had to deal with.

FARA Achievement Award

Description: Significant or meaningful contributions towards the FARA mission.

FARA Achievement Award Winner

Alarm Association of Florida (AAF)

Nominated by: Miami-Dade Police Department

Rationale: The Miami-Dade Police Department would like to nominate the Alarm Association of Florida (AAF) for this award. The FARA Mission Statement's last line states...and to foster an environment of cooperation among law enforcement, the alarm industry and the alarm user. The AAF is a perfect example of our Mission Statement:

1. During the past year, members of the AAF have sat with us on numerous occasions and advised us on how to best revamp our Ordinance. With the most significant change being the request for 2nd call verification. The AAF has also attended and spoken on behalf of our Ordinance at the County Commission hearings. And although the ordinance has been deferred on several occasions the AAF continues to drive down to Miami to make themselves available.
2. The AAF provided MDPD and local jurisdictions with free training to all staff. This training concentrated on the workings of an alarm system and how to properly respond to alarm companies and citizens that insist that their alarm system was set off because of such and such. They provided all attendees with AAF bags and handouts for future reference. My staff felt more confident after the training, stating that since they now knew how a system worked they would no longer have "the wool pulled over their eyes".
3. The AAF has agreed to assist and provide instructors for MDPD's Alarm Awareness School.
4. The AAF and their legal team are actively researching the Senate and Legislature in hopes of sponsoring a Bill that will restrict Public Record's requests in Miami-Dade County.

There are many more items that can be listed, but in short the AAF strives daily to assist us in bridging the gap between Law Enforcement, the Alarm Industry, and the Alarm User.

