

THE PROBLEM

The Manteca Police Department is committed to providing an appropriate response to alarm systems. The Manteca Police Department has conducted an analysis of all audible alarms within the city in 2008. Police responded to 3527 residential burglary alarms of which 98.7% of these alarms were the result of mechanical failure or owner error and not due to criminal activity.

- 99% of all audible alarms were false
- Audible alarms represent 10-12% of our daily call load. Response times to legitimate calls are reduced.
- We estimated an annual cost of over \$80,000 to the PD in responding to false alarms.
- The time lost responding to false alarms is equivalent to one full-time police officer position.

A close examination of the alarm industry revealed that the contract for alarm services is between the alarm company and the alarm owner and is not binding on the City. The City is not a party to the contract. But historically we are expected to provide service. What began thirty years ago as a courtesy response has become an expectation. This service is a detriment to our budget and availability to more legitimate needs. Responding to audible alarms serves a private few, but yet is subsidized by all taxpayers.

WHAT IS VERIFIED RESPONSE?

During this study, we examined a number of alternatives to the traditional alarm response model. Most of the alternatives just managed the problem. Of all the systems being used by other cities and police agencies, we agreed that the “**Verified Response**” model has had the most success in actually reducing police response to false alarms and therefore reducing costs to the Police Department and the City. It has also delivered a higher level of service to the consumer and no drop in business for the alarm companies.

Verified Response requires human verification of a crime or problem before police are dispatched. Eye witnesses, video or audio verification can accomplish this requirement. An example would be two points of activation such as a door or window barrier alarm followed by an internal motion detector.

- Verified Response does not apply to **robbery, panic, or duress alarms**. Police respond regardless.

- In other cities, response times by security agents are generally faster than the PD.

- Verified Response is recognized by the US Department of Justice as the #1 Best Practice.

WHAT IS CHANGING?

The Manteca Police Department will respond to your alarms in the following manner:

1. **Hold Up Alarms** – Police response to hold up alarms will not change.

2. **Distress Alarms** – Police will respond to residential and commercial distress alarms after the alarm company has attempted to verify the alarm by calling the premises.

3. **Local (Audible) Alarms** – Police will only respond to local alarms if criminal activity has been verified.

4. **Residential and Commercial Burglar Alarms** – Police will respond to all commercial and residential alarms when criminal activity has been verified. Police will also respond to burglar alarms if there are two separate monitoring zones activated, and if the alarm company's monitoring station has been unsuccessful in their attempt to contact the premises.

Methods of Verification:

1. Audio and video communication
2. Guard or alternate response

WHAT CAN I DO?

False Alarms - Resolving false alarms is everyone's responsibility. There are some simple measures that can be taken to reduce false alarms. The following tips are simple steps that can dramatically reduce the number of false calls you may experience during the life of your system.

At Home – Avoid objects that trigger your alarm. Such as, when leaving your premise, ensure that all doors and windows are locked. Correct all drafts that may move plants and curtains, both of which may trigger your alarm. Insist that the keypad is easily accessible from the exit point and that the arming delay is set for a reasonable period.

System – Replace the back-up battery every three to five years. Insist that the system have a simple method for testing that will not result in a false dispatch, and then perform a test monthly. Insist that your system has a cancel signal. Insist on a service call after unexplained alarms. Request annual maintenance checks. After household changes (remodeling, pets, etc.), contact the alarm company to ensure alteration does not affect the system. Insist that the installing company adequately trains you on your system and be sure you understand how to operate it BEFORE the technician leaves.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why are the Police changing the way in which they respond to false alarms?

- The change is intended to reduce police response to false alarms, giving them more time to respond to verified alarms and calls for service.

2. Will the Police continue to attend alarms?

- Police are implementing a "Verified Response" policy, which will require confirmation of criminal activity prior to police response. Once verified, the Manteca Police Department is committed to providing a high priority response.

3. Who is responsible for verifying the alarm?

- The responsibility for verifying the alarm will be placed with the premise owner, the alarm monitoring company, a guard, or an alternate responder.

4. Has Verified Response proven effective in other cities?

- Cities that have adopted a Verified Response system have experienced a significant reduction in false alarms, which has freed officers to respond to legitimate calls.

5. When will these changes take effect?

- July 1, 2009.

6. Is there anything I can do to assist this process?

- The Manteca Police Department recommends that you contact your alarm company for further information. They can advise you how this policy will affect your current alarm status, and they will explain how they intend to comply with these new policies.

David Bricker
Chief of Police

Manteca Police Department



Alarm Response Policy Changes

VERIFIED RESPONSE

For more information
or to obtain permits

Go to

www.mantecapd.com

**VERIFIED ALARM RESPONSE TAKES EFFECT JULY 1, 2009
PERMITS ARE REQUIRED**