

Alarm User Awareness Class

Why are we here?



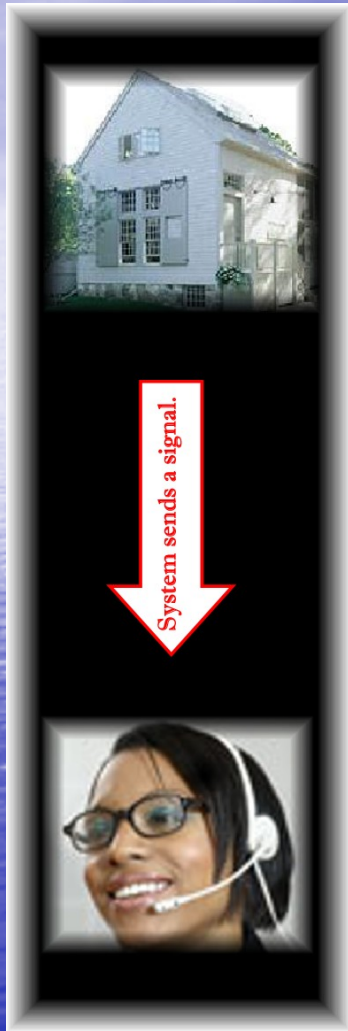
- Your alarm caused you to receive a false alarm fine
- What were the specific causes of your last false alarm?

What We Will Cover



- How alarm systems really work
- What constitutes a "False Alarm"
- Causes & impacts of false alarms
- How to reduce & eliminate false alarms

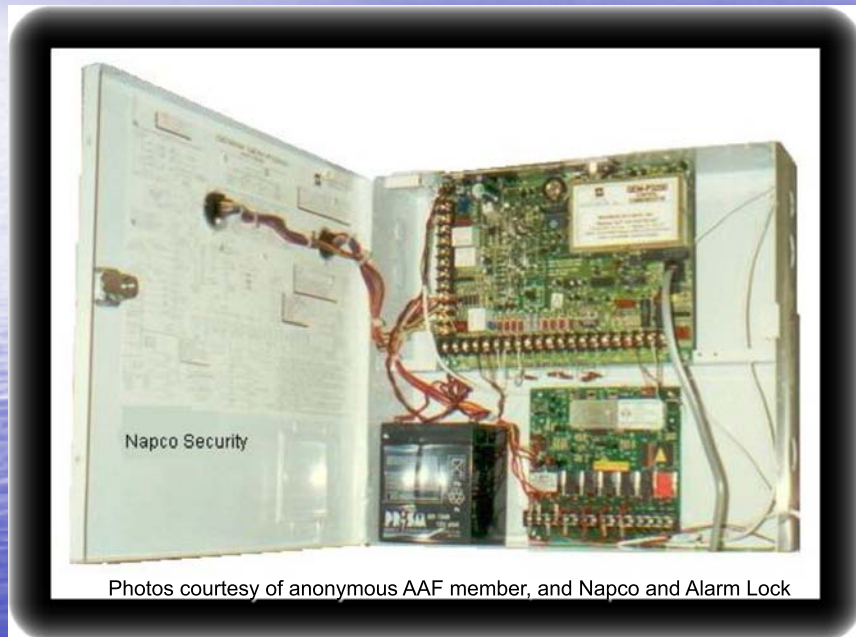
What Causes an Alarm?



- System is activated
 - Door or window is opened
 - Motion or glass break sensor is triggered
 - Panic button is pushed
 - Smoke or fire sensor activated
- Central station receives alarm signal
 - Verification to premises
 - Response/no response from premises
 - Dispatch police or fire if necessary

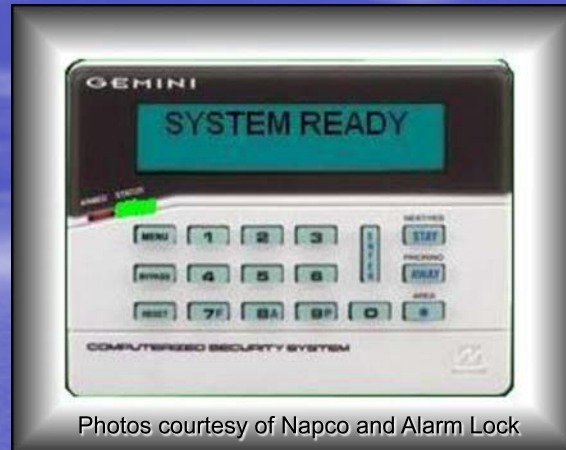
Alarm System Components

The Alarm Control Panel



Photos courtesy of anonymous AAF member, and Napco and Alarm Lock

- The “brain” of the system
- Monitors all sensors
- Activates the siren, sends signal to Alarm Central Station
- Provides power to all system devices
- Supervises the system and reports trouble conditions



Photos courtesy of Napco and Alarm Lock

The Keypad

- The user interface to the system
- Allows the user to operate the system by pushing keys



Glass Break Detector

- The "ears" of the system
- Detects the sound of breaking glass



Motion Detectors



Photo courtesy of Rokonet Security Products

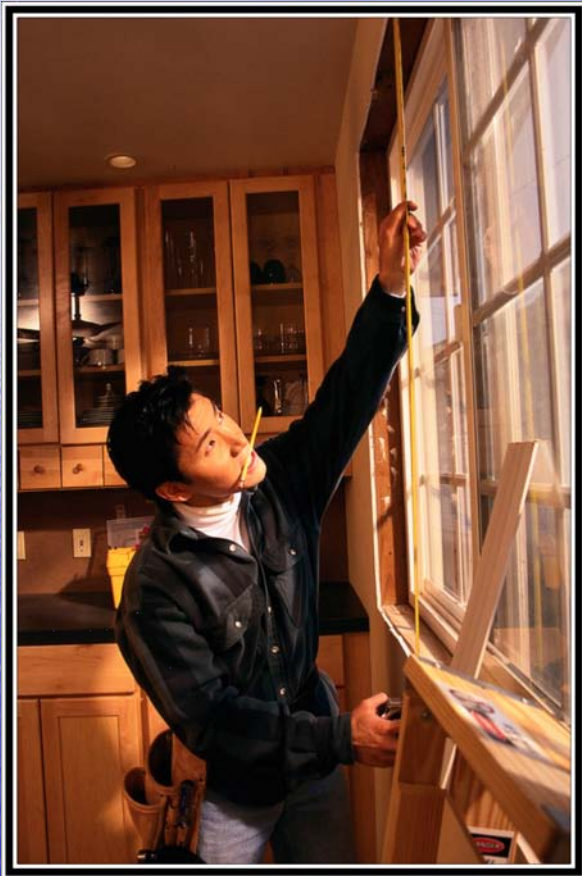
- The “eyes” of the system
- Detects motion inside the premises

Contacts



- The system “workhorse” which detects opening of the doors and windows

Security Alarm Screens



- May be used on sliding, sash, casement or awning type windows
- Creates a barrier via wire embedded into screen fabric
- May be secured with plugs and magnetic contacts or wire traps fastened to frame
- Requires periodic replacement due to environmental deterioration

Siren/Speaker



Photo courtesy of Elk Security Products

- The “voice” of the system
- Sounds to frighten intruder & alert occupants
- Combined outside and inside sirens provide best results

System Operation

System Ready - Disarmed



- System is disarmed (off)
 - Doors can be opened
 - Windows can be opened
 - Motion detectors are not active
 - Siren is silent
- System is ready to be armed (turned on)
 - Panic Button is still active
 - CO2, fire and smoke sensors are always active

Alarm System - Armed



Photos courtesy of Napco and Alarm Lock Security Products

- System is armed (turned on)
 - You must exit within delay period
 - Windows can not be open
 - Doors can not be opened
 - with exception of exiting through designated door
 - Motion detectors are active

Alarm System - In 'Alarm'

1) Burglary occurs



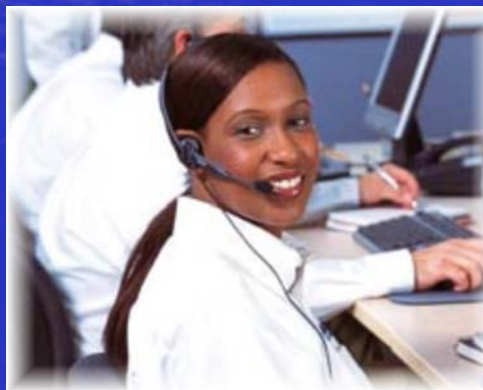
3) Alarm signal sent to the central station



2) Siren sounds



4) Operator responds to the alarm signal



Alarms: Your First Line of Defense

Used properly, alarm systems are one of the most effective ways to deter burglaries .



Used improperly may result in...

False Alarms!



What's That Sound I Hear Next Door?

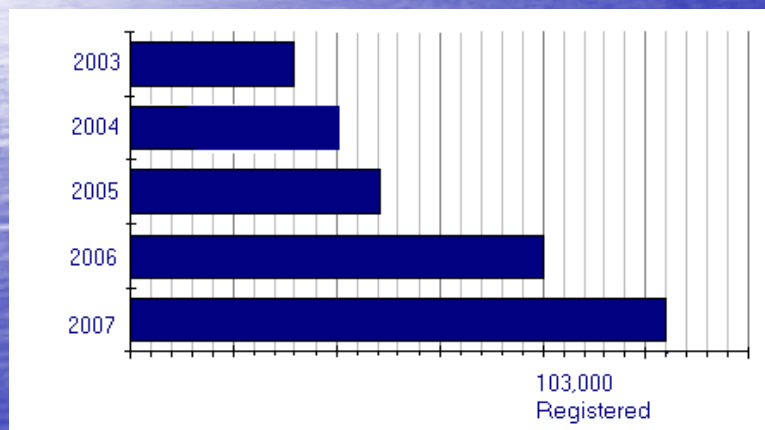


Could it be a false alarm?

- False Alarm vs. False Dispatch
 - False Alarm: Alarm system detects alarm status erroneously through user error, equipment, etc.
 - False Dispatch: Notification of an alarm to the law enforcement agency and responding authority finds no evidence of a criminal offense or attempted criminal offense

False Alarms = A higher demand for response

- Some Florida cities have registered over 100,000 residential and commercial alarm systems.
- The number of new alarm systems is growing at the rate of approx. 7.746% per year.



More false alarms will result in the need for additional police officers to respond to these calls



False Alarms

- Are dangerous to police and the community
- Distract public safety responders from addressing real emergencies
- Waste valuable budgeted resources
- Are very expensive



False Alarms: The Problem

One Florida community reported that false alarm response in 2007 and subsequent costs were as follows:

- 92.4% of all alarm calls received for police dispatch were false alarms
- 80,000 false alarms in 2007 at a cost of \$91.60 per response
- Over \$7,000,000 responding to false alarms in 2007

False Alarm Fines

“But I already pay for police and fire services!”

- Some might argue that this is what Police and Fire responders are for and that we pay them to respond
- But would you call the police or Fire Department to come turn on your lawn sprinklers?



- Skilled and trained professionals are being forced to waste your taxpayer \$\$\$ responding to false alarms
- False alarms collectively cost the community measurable dollars as well as degradation of community services!



Police Officer Safety

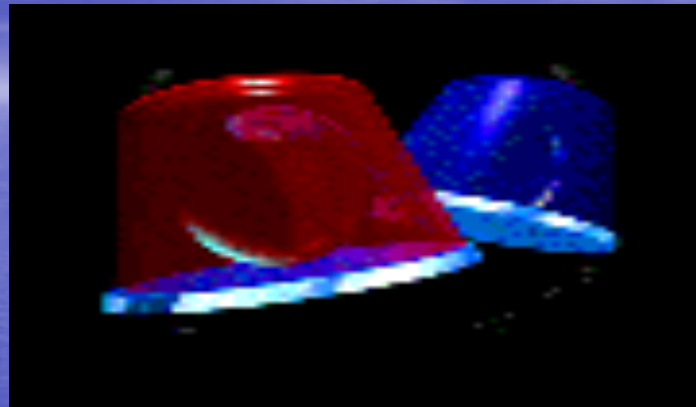
- Alarm systems provide an effective deterrent & serve as the first line of defense against crime

BUT FALSE ALARMS:



- may cause law enforcement officers to be complacent in responding to alarms (a life safety issue for officers if it happens to be a real burglary)
- may eventually result in delayed and ineffective response to alarm calls

False Alarms



- Are rarely intentionally caused
- Are embarrassing to the alarm user
 - Result in fines in most cities

So why do so many false alarms occur?



What Causes False Alarms?

Top Five reasons:



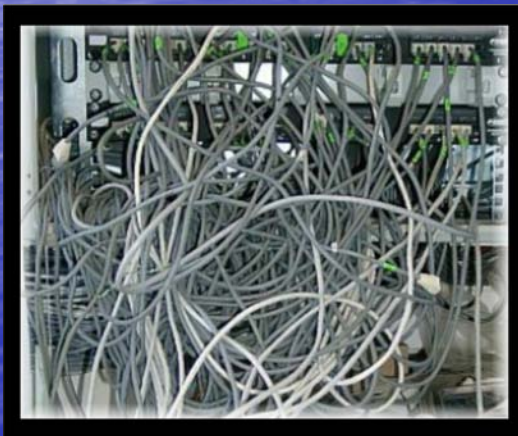
5. Weather Related

4. Lack of Proper Maintenance

3. Misapplication of Equipment

2. Installation Quality

1. Inadequate User Training



Causes of False Alarms



- Improper entry & exiting
- Equipment malfunction



- Window/door left ajar
- Motion detectors with animals



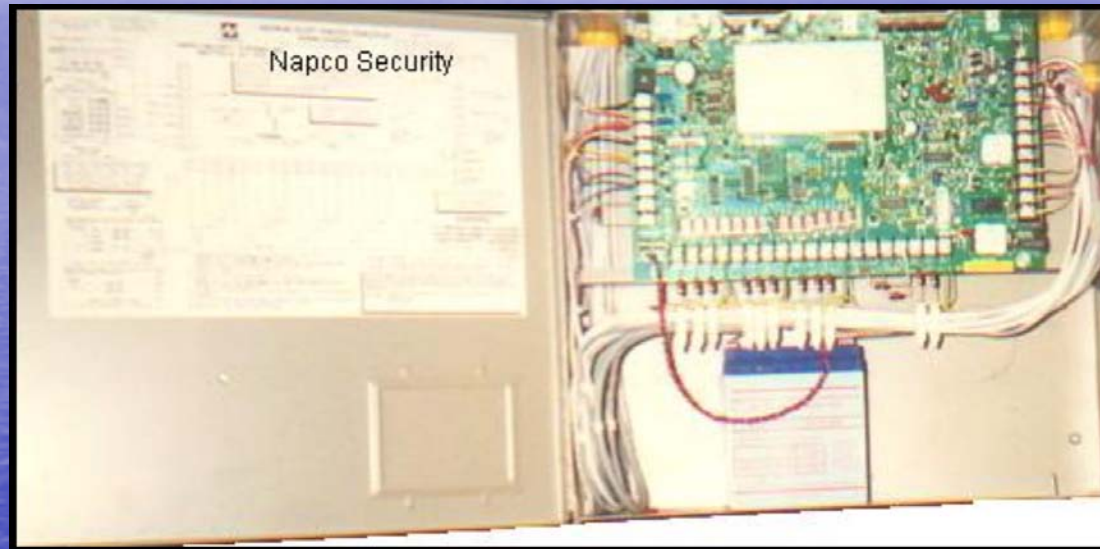
- Installation problems
- Poor maintenance

If your alarm panel wiring
looks like this...



Get another alarm company!

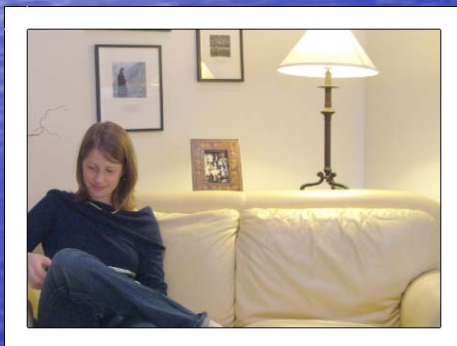
If your alarm panel wiring
looks like this...



You probably hired a professional!

Reduce False Dispatches

- Understand your system. Read the alarm user manual
- Know your Central Station's telephone number
- Meet officers who respond to activated alarm
- Know the cancellation code



Reduce False Dispatches

Call your alarm company:

- BEFORE you start any remodeling
- When you change an authorized alarm user or emergency contact
- When you change your phone number or phone service
- When you are moving
- When you have an unexplained false alarm
- Tenting for bug extermination



Reduce False Dispatches



Train all alarm users

- Everyone who has a key needs a password to contact the Central Station
- Includes : guests, workers, housekeepers, realtors, neighbors, relatives, etc. Anyone who may enter your home while you are not there



Reduce False Dispatches



Re-Entering

- If you re-enter your premises because you've forgotten something, turn off the alarm & re-set it when you leave again
- Do this even if you think you will only be a few seconds!
- Some alarm panels will do this feature automatically for you

Reduce False Dispatches

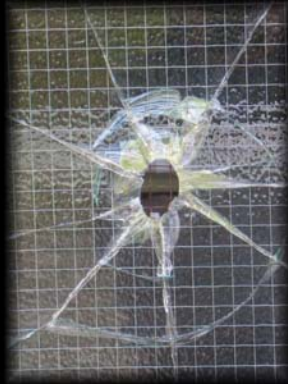
Canceling Alarms

- If your alarm is set off accidentally wait for your alarm company to call you back,

OR
- Follow your alarm company's instructions for canceling an alarm signal
- If you don't receive a call from the central station within a few minutes, you should call them.



Reduce False Dispatches



Bypassing Zones

- Know how to "bypass"(shut off) the motion detector when you are at home
- Know how to shut off a malfunctioning component ("zone") until repair is completed



Reduce False Dispatches

Inspect The Alarm System

- Follow your alarm company's instructions on testing the system regularly - don't test it by intentionally setting it off.
- Get a yearly systems inspection.
- Have your alarm company replace batteries as needed; wireless systems generally require this more often.



Typical Wireless Transmitter Battery

Typical Smoke



Detector Battery



Typical Control Panel Battery

Reduce False Dispatches

Holdup Buttons

- Seriously consider whether you truly need this option
- Properly train your employees if you do
- Make sure you do not have "single action" holdup buttons
- Silent holdup alarms generally have a different response from the Central Station
- All authorized persons should know where they are and what they are for



Reduce False Dispatches



Duress Codes



- A duress code appears to turn off the system but sends a special emergency message to your monitoring center. For example, if you were forced to turn off the system against your will
- Avoid + 1 duress codes

Reduce False Dispatches

Keypad Entry Errors

- Know how to "clear" a wrong code if you make a mistake on the keypad
- Some keypads only require that you eventually get the right numbers in sequence
- Some require a short wait before accepting a corrected entry.

Reduce False Dispatches



Door and Window Alarms

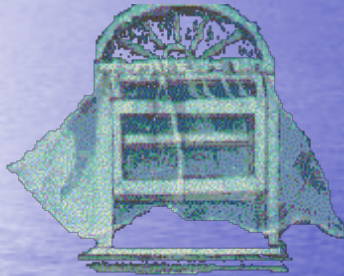
- Doors & windows must be tight fitting & locked
- Door & window contacts must be free of paint & varnish
- Make sure there is no door or window warping
- Check weathering of security screens
- Lightning may damage magnetic contacts and other devices causing them to fail

Reduce False Dispatches

Motion Detector Alarms

- Be aware of what can cause motion detector alarms -

- ✓ Helium balloons (especially Mylar)
- ✓ Pets – use pet-alley motion detectors
- ✓ Bugs on the lens
- ✓ Curtains
- ✓ Open windows
- ✓ Fans that are left on
- ✓ Falling inventory such as stacked boxes, tires, etc that might fall over



Now you know...

ALARMS CAN BE YOUR FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE

Remember, You have a responsibility
to use your system properly.

And now you know how!!!

Law Enforcement & The Alarm Industry



What We Are Doing to Reduce False Alarms

Law Enforcement & The Alarm Industry - Working together to educate public safety officials, alarm users and alarm companies.

Industry Self Regulation

- Employee Training
- User Training
- Equipment Standards & Improved Monitoring Center Procedures

Government Regulation

- Permitting
- Eliminating response to top offenders
- Ordinances

One Example of Law Enforcement & The Alarm Industry Working Together



For one Florida County:

- An Alarm ordinance has been in effect since 1988.
- In 1993 the ordinance was revised
- In 1999 the ordinance was revised again
- In 2007 there are plans to revise the ordinance again together with The Alarm Association of Florida and the County Sheriff's Office
- In all instances the Alarm Community played an important part in the development of the ordinance.
- Even as alarm installations increased - the number of police dispatches decreased.....

Law Enforcement Regulating alarm users



Typical Permit Fees:

- New Registrations \$25.00 – \$100.00
- Renewal (annual) \$ 25.00 – \$100.00
- 2 "Free" false alarms per year
- All other false alarms are charged to the alarm user

Law Enforcement Regulating alarm users

Causes for police response suspension:

- Not paying alarm fines
- After over limit false alarms
- One chargeable false alarm waived if you attend Alarm User Awareness School in some cities



Law Enforcement

Regulating alarm users

- Some authorities have enacted ordinances that stop responses after a certain number of false alarms
- Several US cities have eliminated response to alarm signals entirely
- Other cities have resisted this in favor of public service. However, alarm users are held to a high standard with fines and alarm schools for repeat offenders



ENHANCED CALL VERIFICATION (ECV)



- ECV - The practice of making two phone calls (to different numbers) to verify burglar alarm signals prior to police dispatch.
- In 2006 the Alarm Association of Florida spearheaded the efforts, along with support from the Florida Police Chiefs Association and Florida Sheriffs Association, to have ECV mandated as a state law requirement.
- That effort was successful and was signed into law on June 9th 2006.
- Effective Date July 1, 2006



ENHANCED CALL VERIFICATION (ECV)

Florida Statute 489.529

Alarm verification calls required.-All residential or commercial intrusion/burglary alarms that have central monitoring must have a central monitoring verification call made to the premises generating the alarm signal, prior to alarm monitor personnel contacting a law enforcement agency for alarm dispatch. The central monitoring station must employ call-verification methods for the premises generating the alarm signal if the first call is not answered. However, if the intrusion/burglary alarms have properly operating visual or auditory sensors that enable the monitoring personnel to verify the alarm signal, verification calling is not required.

ECV The Process



ALARM ACTIVATES AT
CUSTOMER PREMISE

PREMISE VERIFICATION
CALL MADE

NO ANSWER
OR
NO CODE

SUBSCRIBER ANSWERS
ADVISES DO NOT
DISPATCH
FALSE ALARM
PROPER CODE GIVEN

2ND VERIFICATION CALL
MADE
TO CELL PHONE OR
OTHER NUMBER ON FILE

NO ANSWER

SUB OR OTHER
EMERGENCY
CONTACT ADVISES
NOT TO DISPATCH
PROPER CODE GIVEN

DISPATCH TO POLICE

MONITORING STATION
CONTACTS
OTHER EMERGENCY
CONTACTS
ON SUBSCRIBERS LIST

What To Expect From Your Alarm Company

- Provide written instruction manual
- Provide clear training at the time of installation
- Available to answer follow-up questions
- Prompt & effective repair of the system
- Alarm verification by telephone call, (required by Florida State law)
- Clean and neat installation



What To Expect From Your Alarm Company

- Proper licenses required
- Proper certification of technicians
- Available to update account information - phone numbers, emergency contacts
- Able to identify "zones" which have been tripped
- Available to receive emergency calls after business hours
- Able to provide ongoing training for use of alarm systems for users



What To Expect From Your Alarm Company

Fire Alarm Systems

- Commercial and residential fire alarm systems are designed with strict adherence to the science of fire propagation
- Fire alarms are continuously “on” and work 24 hours a day. Minimal operation is required by end user
- A well designed, installed, *and then*, well maintained system can provide years of trouble free protection



What you can do to reduce false alarms

- Provide accurate contact information prior to system “going on line”
- Become familiar with your system for a few days before connection to central station monitoring
- Ask for additional training if needed
- Make sure that all users are familiar with the operation of the system
- Have repairs done immediately when needed, don’t wait for the ‘second’ false alarm and dispatch



Alarms Reduce Crime!!



Residences with alarm systems were six times less likely to be burglarized than homes without security systems

Acknowledgements

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