

What REALLY Happens When Your Burglar Alarm Goes Off

HINT: The Police Are Between 1 and 4 Hours Away

This report contains vital information directly from veteran police officers for business people and homeowners who wish to protect themselves from burglaries. Almost everyone assumes that if their alarm goes off, the alarm monitoring company will call the police, who then will come rushing to the scene. In reality, the police regularly take from 1 to 4 hours to respond to unverified burglar alarms. Burglars are aware of this fact, and rely on it.

This report examines the one element of using a burglar alarm that everyone *mistakenly* takes for granted — the expectation the police will immediately respond to your burglar alarm when they are contacted by your alarm monitoring service. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. A word of caution as you begin to read and understand what we reveal in this report: Some of the facts here will surprise you and perhaps even shock you. Others will leave you frustrated and mad. All of them are facts that have not been openly discussed before. But all of them are completely true, and we encourage you to verify any of these facts for yourself. One other key point: These facts might make you very upset with law enforcement agencies or maybe our politicians. This anger would be misdirected, and would not, in the end, solve the problem we are going to describe. Everything we are going to detail has been a fact of life for some time now, except it has not made it into the news media, and almost nobody knows where to look to get the whole story.

The Way We *Think* Our Alarms Protect Us

Burglar alarms come in many shapes and sizes, from basic units that tell if a door or window is opened, all the way to high-tech systems that can remotely operate cameras and visually inspect areas inside your building. Whether you have a sophisticated system or a basic unit, if the system is connected to a central monitoring service, then that monitoring service will be notified immediately when your system has been activated. Once the signal from your alarm has been sent to the monitoring center, the operator at the monitoring center is responsible for contacting whoever has been pre-assigned for notification when the alarm goes off. In many cases this is typically the police, often followed by a responsible party, such as the business or home owner. The common presumption is that once the police are notified, they will immediately send an officer to the home or building. Unfortunately, this is NOT the case in the real world.

Responding to Alarms Has Never Been a Police Priority

Last year, the Albuquerque Police Department received more than 40,000 calls for burglar alarms — and well over 90% of these calls were false alarms. With this huge drain on the police department's resources, police policy is to treat alarm response calls as a "Level 3" priority. Level 3 is considered a low priority. This means that if they are in the process of responding to a burglar alarm, and another call of higher priority comes in, they take the higher priority call first. For example, a report of a vicious stray dog is a "Level 1" call, and will be higher in priority than your burglar alarm. The enormous volume of false alarms consumes a significant portion of every eight-hour shift for every police officer. They try to respond as quickly as possible, but their workload is a serious issue. Because of this problem, the police department has been forced to keep alarm response as one of their lower priorities.

Hours Have Gone by... and the Clock Is Still Ticking

It is not uncommon to have burglar alarm calls sit in the system so long that the next shift coming on duty is going to inherit these calls

and finally investigate. Some commanders and sergeants will even tell their officers to completely ignore all alarm calls unless a “responsible party” (meaning someone like the building owner, an employee, or the homeowner) shows up first and verifies that there was an intrusion. It’s common for the police department to take anywhere from 1 to 4 hours to respond to most local alarm dispatches. Once again, this is not by choice on the part of the police. The police take their role in crime prevention and public safety very seriously. We are fortunate to have so many high-caliber individuals on our force! Albuquerque and Rio Rancho are growing, and the police departments do not have the resources to chase one false alarm after another. The police recognize that burglaries are one of the largest sources of crime in our city, with over 5,000 burglaries reported last year. And even though a business burglary could cost you over \$25,000 in stolen items, it’s still not possible for the police to send out an officer immediately when they get the call from your alarm monitoring company.

Thieves Are Learning They Have Loads of Time

The police dispatcher will tell the monitoring company, when they call, that it could be an hour or more before an officer can be dispatched. When the police finally have the time to investigate, the individual officer is often embarrassed by the huge delay between the time the call arrived from the monitoring service, and the actual time when he can finally come to the site. When the officer finally arrives, they often just quickly scan the front door, and if all seems OK, they keep on going. This is not really an investigation, and if something has occurred around the rear of the building, or somewhere else on the perimeter, they would be unlikely to see the full situation. Crooks are well aware of the slow response from the police and they use it to their advantage. Your business or home could be “cleaned out” long before the police ever show up. It has been found that some crooks will even set off your alarm, hide near the building, and see how long it takes for the police to respond. They now know how much

time they have when they are ready to break into your building for real.

After Too Many False Alarms, You Will Be Fined

In 2003, when the city council realized the tremendous waste of police resources in responding to false alarms, they took two steps to address the problem. First, they required all alarm system owners to register annually with the city. So far, only about a third of alarm system owners have followed this part of the law. The other step they took was to establish fines for repeat false alarms. After 3 warnings, the fines start at \$150 and then jump to \$500 per occurrence after the tenth false alarm! These fines still have not resolved the problem, and so the council is considering increasing the fines. These fines can quickly add up and become a major headache for business owners.

It’s 3:12 am: Your Phone Rings

Some businesses have grown so frustrated with the current state of slow responses and excessive fines that they have notified their monitoring company to call the property owner instead of the police. In this case, you or one of your employees will be responsible for investigating all alarms at your building. Perhaps you are willing to put up with a ruined night of sleep when you must go to your office at 3:12 am. But don’t forget that there were over 5,000 burglaries in Albuquerque last year — some of them at gunpoint. Robbery is still one of the largest sources of crime in the city. Are you willing to take that risk? If it is your home, are you really going to leave work to check the alarm?

Now Your Safety Is at Risk

The police want to catch crooks, and if you see one at your home or business, they will treat that call as a Level 1 priority, and you will have a fast response. The problem is, do you really want to be the person who checks out the alarm condition at your building, with the possibility of meeting up, face-to-face, with someone robbing your business? Do you like being woken up in the middle of the night by the alarm monitoring company, telling you to go to your building and check or shut off

the alarm? Are you trained like a police officer in how to respond to an intruder?

Most Alarm Monitoring Companies Will Dodge This Reality

Typical alarm monitoring companies are well aware of these facts, even if they have not publically admitted them so far. Frankly, all they are set up to do is monitor your alarm and then call the police (or you, the alarm owner). They don't have any way to make the police respond quickly. Because of the delay in response from the police, a few businesses have contracted with local security companies to regularly patrol their buildings. But this solution comes with a steep price tag. A guard that checks your property, even if only once per hour during the overnight hours, and can cost you over \$14,000 per year. Some neighborhoods have roving guards but how likely are they to stop criminals?

So Here Are Your Options...

You can continue allowing a traditional monitoring company to call the police, with the following consequences:

- ✓ Pay for false alarm fines
- ✓ Wait for the police to come when they have all their higher priority work done
- ✓ Run the risk that a crook will have as much as an hour or more to clean you out.

You can tell your alarm monitoring company to call you instead of the police, with the following consequences:

- ✓ You, your family members, or your key employees will get calls at odd hours during the night and on weekends.
- ✓ Someone from your company or family will need to go to your home or building and check out the problem
- ✓ You have a chance of encountering an intruder and then having to decide what to do next.

You can decide to skip the alarm monitoring service, with the following consequences:

- ✓ Your alarm will be a noisy annoyance that will be ignored by everyone.

- ✓ You could receive nuisance complaints from neighbors.
- ✓ You have no way of knowing if you have been robbed until you show up at the location.

You can contract with a security company to try and respond to your alarms, or to provide routine patrols, with the following consequences:

- ✓ They could send an UNQUALIFIED and UNTRAINED security guard who overreacts to someone from your cleaning crew or a late working employee.
- ✓ Response times are still slow because the security companies handle scheduled patrols as their first duty, because it is worth more to them.
- ✓ You could face outrageous costs for routine and often ineffective patrols.

Many business owners find, to their frustration, that *none* of these options meet their needs adequately.

Finally, an Alternative That Eliminates All These Problems

Fortunately, a police department veteran here in Albuquerque recognized the dilemma that business owners and home owners face, and has started a company that eliminates all these problems. The Armed Response Team is a professional service staffed by veteran law enforcement officers from your local police department, dedicated to one thing and only one thing — responding immediately in-person when your business or home alarm is triggered. They are armed, equipped and trained exactly like police officers, and they are your first line of defense against any problems that might occur at your location. You are safe, your property is protected, you'll never get fined for false alarms, and the city is not burdened by wasting police time on false alarms — everyone wins!

For a monthly fee, we will immediately respond when your alarm monitoring

company calls us. We don't require long-term contracts, because it limits your options about something as crucial as your safety and security. We feel that if you are unhappy with the services of the Armed Response Team, you should be able to switch to other options with only 30 days notice. We work with your current alarm system, and we send the alarm signal to our local professional monitoring and dispatch center. We respond as often as your alarm is triggered, for one monthly fee. And, better still, you'll get NO fines for false alarms — EVER.

Call 237-2278 for an appointment with one of our Security Advisors.

The next step is to call 237-2278. One of our Security Advisors will walk through your home or business and look for any vulnerability that crooks will use to get in and steal your possessions. Our advisor is not like your typical alarm salesperson, because they look at your location based on their experience with seeing so many crimes first hand. They will give you their suggestions, and then the decisions are yours to make going forward.

What Services Do You Offer?

The Armed Response Team offers all the elements of traditional burglar alarm companies, with one crucial addition. Just like any other alarm company, we can install and service most brands of alarm equipment. We offer professional local monitoring of your alarm signals. We can typically reuse most or all of your current alarm system, or we can install a brand new system if needed. The one crucial addition NOT OFFERED by all other alarm companies, local or national, big or small, is our promise of an immediate in-person response by a veteran local police officer. The Armed Response Team covers all of Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Corrales, and Bernalillo. In the end, only the Armed Response Team has the total approach to security to give you peace of mind that your home or business is protected.

If you want to have the knowledge your home and office are truly safe, call the Armed Response Team at 237-2278. Sign up now and we will waive the cost of preprogramming your existing alarm system (a \$150 value) please mention code # 2502 when calling our office. Call 237-2278, or visit us on the web at www.ArmedResponseTeam.com

We trust this information has been revealing. Almost everyone who has signed up for our service was either unaware of this gap in coverage for their home or office, or they knew about slow police response and did not know there was an alternative.