

Dirty Little Secrets From The Alarm Industry

This disclosure of "dirty little secrets" is an effort by segments of the private security industry to audit itself against deceptive business practices. We support "Zero Tolerance for False Alarms". We believe public exposure of a problem is motivation for corrective action.

- 1.** Alarm Associations do not represent the majority of alarm companies. There are well over 10,000 alarm companies serving the United States, whereas less than half that number is represented by an Association. Also, Associations do not have any authority or responsibility to make commitments for industry participants. Consequently Alarm Associations are not a good partner with municipalities for crafting false alarm solutions.
- 2.** Nearly all alarm signals are errors, even after fifty years of business and 30 million installations. That's because modern alarm systems are not very modern. There is a serious flaw in most monitored alarm systems. That flaw produces nearly 100% error. That flaw is.... the inability of a traditional monitoring center to separate police emergencies from non-emergencies. Alarms that call the monitoring center are simply "alerts that suggest that something moved" at the protected site. Nothing, absolutely nothing suggests a police emergency. So, site inspections are required to determine the cause of the signal. Alarm companies use the police to make these site inspections... to determine IF an emergency exists, not because of an emergency. Which explains why nearly 100% are unnecessary.
- 3.** Alarm companies all across the country have already been discredited by having their calls for help (customer alarm signals) de-prioritized to a non-emergency status. With or without VR, the police still may not respond, or average over 20 minutes to respond, long after the event. However, 911 type response is always available to all citizens and alarm companies that witness a police emergency. Verified Response is full public disclosure of the serious issue of deception about monitored alarm systems.
- 4.** An example of deceptive alarm policies, crafted by Alarm Associations, is Los Angeles. It was a compromise to avoid VR, which backfired. In LA, every call from an alarm company will cost their customer between \$100-\$300 per call, no freebies. Then pure VR applies after 2 false. Worse yet, LA Chief Bratton openly stated that the LAPD probably will NOT arrive in less than 40 minutes, or not at all, because LA lowered the priority to alarm companies to the lowest level (like a barking dog). In summary, alarm users in LA pay several hundred dollars just for a telephone call from their monitoring source to the PD, and still will not get emergency response. Don't blame the cops for slow or no response, blame your alarm supplier.
- 5.** The real story of why Dallas recently halted their VR program, the only city to stop VR. Dallas exchanged VR for the new mayors promise of 200 more new cops. And the promise that VR could be reinstated. And that the burglary numbers went down during Verified Response. And that private, dedicated response during VR was faster than police response. So now, alarm customers, without VR, will exchange dedicated private response for a low priority, slow or no response. Blame your alarm supplier for blocking the VR.
- 6.** The \$20-50 monthly that dealers now collect from their customers for "monitoring" is a service that is often outsourced to "wholesale monitoring firms" for \$3-\$8 monthly. The assumption that cops are responding to signals, rather than alarm repairman, deceptively inflates the security value of the service too.
- 7.** IF monitoring sources did a responsible job of monitoring alarm systems there would not be the perceived risks during an owner visit to the alarm site. Remember all alarm signals funnel thru a monitoring center where nearly 100% are errors. No errors = no site visits = no additional costs to the customer. Blame your alarm supplier for disruptive and costly site visits, not the cops.
- 8.** Hundreds of cities are now practicing "Default Verified Response". Most major cities, including NYC, Chicago, Philadelphia, Los Angeles and most of their suburbs practice "Default VR". Over 5 million alarm systems are within Default VR cities. The primary difference between "Default" and "Formal" VR is full public disclosure of the slow or no response. Formal VR = No deception.
- 9.** Visit the FBI website and research the Uniform Crime Report. You will discover there is not any correlation whatsoever to alarm response and burglary rates, with or without VR. Crime rate do not go up just because of VR. The same applies to insurance research...no change, with or without police response.
- 10.** All monitored alarm systems are divided into two basic parts: Part #1 is the on-site installed sensors & controllers, deterrent signs, decals, lights, noisemakers. Part #2 is the optional connection to a monitoring center. The most effective part is #1, the detection sensors and deterrence, all of which remains the same with or without Verified Response. The optional monitoring offers a convenience, but not much more deterrent.

The real reason for the strong opposition by Alarm Associations to "Zero Tolerance" programs, like Verified Response, seems to be "embarrassment". Embarrassed to disclose that most of their inflated revenue stream from their outdated products and services (monitored alarm systems) no longer qualify for emergency police response. So don't blame the cops, blame the alarm supplier.