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False Alarm Update: Little Rock, El Paso, Olympia

Jun 08, 2005, LITTLE ROCK, Ark. -- The Arkansas capital city of Little Rock has passed a new alarm ordinance that requires alarm companies to verify an alarm before contacting police. However, the ordinance still allows for police response to unverified alarms if the alarm owner cannot be reached.

The ordinance, passed June 7 by the Little Rock Board of Directors, will take effect on Jan. 1, according to the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. It replaces a previous ordinance established in 1999.

The false alarm fine structure has also been increased. While the first three false alarm calls in a calendar year remain "free," the maximum charge for each false alarm after a sixth has gone up from \$96 to \$250. However, the ordinance also adds a new provision that reduces the false alarm fine by as much as half if the alarm owner calls police and reports an alarm as false before officers arrive.

The ordinance also sets up the first alarm permit system for Little Rock, though the permits will be free and derved out by alarm companies when they install the system and registered with the city. However, a provision in an earlier version of the ordinance that would require the permit to be posted to be visible from the outside of the residence was dropped.

In other false alarm news ...

EL PASO, Texas:The El Paso City Council will hear a police proposal this summer that would force alarm companies to try to verify alarms before contacting police and also allow police to stop responding to all alarms at an address with a certain amount of false alarms.

El Paso Police Chief Richard Wiles will be making the proposal to the council according to the *El Paso Times*. Wiles told the newspaper that 99 percent of the 2,000 alarm calls a month his department responds to are false.

OLYMPIA, Wash.: A new alarm ordinance passed nearly a year ago has gone into effect in Olympia,

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Wash.

The ordinance was approved [last July](#) but its implementation, expected to take place Jan. 1 but was delayed to April 1, then delayed again to June 1. Under the new law, police will require verification before responding to alarms at locations that have not been registered to police. Officers will continue automatic response to alarm owners who pay the fee to register, which is \$25 for residences and \$35 for commercial and government customers. Alarm companies are responsible for registering the customers and collecting the registration fees, according to *The Olympian*. Fines for every false alarm are also now in effect — \$60 for each false burglar alarm and \$250 for each false panic alarm.

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