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False Alarm Update: Denver, Dallas, Seattle, Bellingham

Mar 02, 2006, DENVER -- Officials with the Denver Fire Department say cooperative efforts with local alarm companies and other businesses have resulted in a 17-percent reduction in false fire alarms caused by life-safety systems since 2001. Fire officials add they are against punitive measures, such as false alarm fees, for those whose systems cause false dispatches.

Fire Chief Larry Trujillo told the *Rocky Mountain News* that charging false fire alarm fees could be a detriment to the department's mission of saving lives. "Our biggest fear is that we will create an unsafe environment," Trujillo said.

The *News* reports the number of false fire alarm dispatches has gone down from 12,279 in 2001 to 10,156 last year. Department officials told the newspaper that the main reason for the decrease has been a cooperative effort with alarm firms to upgrade alarm systems, maintain them properly and correct any problems.

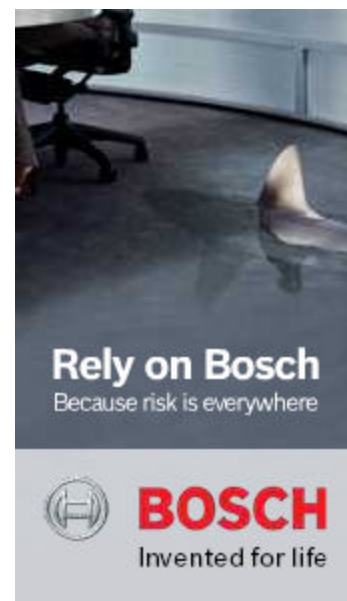
In other false alarm news ...

DALLAS: After a one-month delay, verified response is now in effect for commercial alarms in the city of Dallas. Under the new policy, [approved last December by the city](#), police will not respond to a burglar alarm at a commercial establishment unless they have been verified by a security guard service hired by the alarm company. Response to all burglar alarms will continue for residences.

Verified response, originally set to begin Feb. 1, [was delayed to March 1](#) due to concerns that alarm and security guard companies were not ready for the new policy.

Increased false alarm fines for residential alarms that were part of the new ordinance have been in effect since Feb. 1.

SEATTLE: Police in the largest city in the Northwest say an alarm ordinance passed two years ago that forced alarm companies to pay false alarm fees instead of their customers has resulted in a 38-percent drop in dispatched alarm calls and a 1-percent drop in the percentage of alarm calls that are false.



Security Stock Ticker

Symbol	Price
Brinks	50.65
Diebold	41.13
General Electric	34.89
Honeywell Int'l.	42.74
Ingersoll Rand	41.85
Johnson Controls	75.93
Napco	16.96
NICE Systems	50.66
Protection One	17.50
Siemens	93.15
Stanley Works	50.68
Tyco Int'l.	26.99

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The ordinance, which went into effect in early 2004, forced alarm companies to pay a fee of \$125 for each false alarm and a yearly \$40 registration fee for each system. It also made into law enhanced call verification (ECV), where alarm companies must make two attempts to reach an alarm owner after an activation before police respond. Police in Seattle also no longer respond to alarm customers with more than six false alarms in a calendar year.

Police, in a fact sheet, also credit the establishment of an alarm class for false alarm abusers for helping free up police resources.

BELLINGHAM, Wash.: Police say a verified response policy in the city just north of Seattle has resulted in a 72-percent drop in false alarms. Police also report a slight drop in burglaries despite initial fears that the new policy would result in an increase in crime, according to *The Bellingham Herald*.

The policy, which was [approved in August 2004](#) and went into effect in January 2005, says that police won't respond to any residential alarms or commercial alarms between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. unless they are verified by a security guard or someone else hired by an alarm company. The ordinance is similar to a verified response policy recently [enacted in Dallas](#).

Birmingham police say there were 355 false alarms in 2005 compared to 1,288 the year before. In addition, the number of residential burglaries dropped from 549 to 529 and commercial burglaries were down to 266 compared to 295 the year before.

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