

# SECURITY SYSTEMS NEWS

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General News

June 2006

**Alarm ordinance watch**

ANTIOCH, CALIF.

City officials are thinking about raising false alarm fees for repeat false alarm offenders in light of more than 5,000 alarm calls responded to by police in 2005.

The proposal would more than double false alarm fines, from \$30 to \$65 for the fourth false alarm. The city would also charge \$65 for the fifth false alarm, according to a story in the Contra Costa Times.

One city councilman disagreed with the increase, however. Councilman Arne Simonsen said a call that may appear to have been false could have been an attempted break-in, but the security system might have scared off the burglar before police arrived.

Other city officials pointed to several neighboring communities that have implemented stringent alarm policies, including Fremont, Calif., which will only respond to an alarm if verified first.

LOUDON COUNTY, VA.

The county is reminding residents and businesses about its recently enacted false alarm ordinance, which requires that people register their alarms with the sheriff's office. The county will now also impose fines for repeat false alarm offenders.

False alarm fines kick-in July 1, after a three-month grace period. Businesses and homeowners can expect to receive a \$100 fine for their third false alarms. After that, fines increase with each false alarm, according to a report in The Connection Newspapers.

Residents and businesses inside Leesburg, Purcellville and Middleburg, all incorporated towns, are not impacted by the ordinance. In 2005, the sheriff's office reported responding to 10,000 alarm calls.

MADISON, WIS.

The city's police department is considering dramatically changing its false alarm policy to only respond to security alarms when first verified by a person. It may also more than double the fine for false alarms

The proposal would increase fines from \$100 to \$250 per false alarm, according to a report in the Wisconsin State Journal. The proposal also recommends that police only respond to a burglar alarm if a person first activates the system. Alarm systems that automatically go off would require verification before police would respond.

If the revisions go through, Madison would become the second city in the state to enact a verified response policy. In September 2004, Milwaukee adopted a verified response ordinance.

MARTIN COUNTY, FLA.

Beginning May 1, business owners and residents were required to register their security system with the sheriff's office.

The county implemented the rule, and an increasing fine schedule, to reduce the number of false alarms responded to by sheriff's deputies. According to a report in the Palm Beach Post, the county reported 11,497 false alarms in 2004.

The county plans to begin imposing false alarm fines by early September, allowing residents time to register alarms. At that time, the county will charge \$25 for the second false alarm. False alarm fines increase up to \$150 for 10 false alarms. After a tenth false alarm, the county reserves the right to revoke the alarm permit.



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