

January 20, 2005

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New Year's Laws to Affect Alarm Industry

Dec 27, 2004, LOS ANGELES -- The new year will bring a bite out of the wallet of Los Angeles alarm customers who commit a false alarm. A \$115 fine for a first false alarm offense is one of many laws that take effect on Jan. 1 around the nation that affect alarm companies, manufacturers and their customers. The fine, the result of Los Angeles' [three-year-long debate on a new alarm ordinance](#), will mean no false alarm will be [free](#) in the second largest city in the nation after 2004 becomes 2005.

The policy, approved by the Los Angeles City Council Sept. 21, will have an additional \$50 being added to the fine for each false alarm that follows the first. However, alarm owners can seek an amnesty where they can have the fines removed if they purchase or renew their alarm permit.

After two false alarms, Los Angeles police don't respond to an alarm unless it is verified by someone at the source under a policy that has been in place since last Jan. 1.

Other Jan. 1 changes to law that could affect alarm customers include:

TUCSON, Ariz.: Under a law [passed on May 25](#), fines for false alarms will be issued after a third false alarm offense and the fee itself will increase. There will be an initial \$165 fine for a third false alarm within a calendar year. The fine will go up for each false alarm. Previously, the initial false alarm charge was \$125 and it didn't kick in until a fifth false alarm.

BELLINGHAM, Wash.: Verified response will officially be the policy of the police department in the northern Washington city as of 6 a.m. on Jan. 1. Police will require a private guard or another person to verify a residential alarm with them before they respond. The city council [approved the new policy on Aug. 30](#). The verified policy will also apply to commercial intrusion alarms between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. Police will continue to respond to unverified

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commercial alarms outside of that time window. The policy will not apply to stores selling firearms or to fire and panic alarms. At the same time, there will no longer be any false alarm fines. However, an alarm user will face a \$500 penalty if they falsely verify an alarm.

BROCKVILLE, Ontario, Canada: Officers in the city just north of the U.S. border with New York will not respond to any burglar alarms with addressed where three false alarms have been recorded within a calendar year.

To reinstate police response, an alarm owner will need to pay a \$75 fee after a third false alarm. Response will be discontinued again with the next and each subsequent false alarm unless a \$150 fee is paid to police.

ALASKA: As of Jan. 1, just about every residence in the state must have a carbon monoxide warning system.

A CO alarm will be required in every single family house, duplex, apartment, dormitory or group home with either a carbon-based fuel appliance, and adjacent carport or garage, or sits next to a parking lot.

NEW HAMPSHIRE: While the state will still not require licensing for alarm technicians, a voluntary certification process will start Jan. 1 for those who install and service burglar and/or fire alarms, portable fire extinguishers, and fire extinguisher and sprinkler systems.

The act, passed by the New Hampshire legislature in April, also establishes a state alarm system advisory committee to include industry representatives.

MOORESTOWN, N.J.: The suburb of Philadelphia will see higher fines for false fire alarms before the new year even starts. A new false fire alarm fee structure, approved earlier this month by the township council, kicks in on Dec. 31.

The fees will be as high as \$600 for a commercial fire alarm owner with a fourth false alarm within a calendar year.

For commercial alarm owners, fines will increase from \$100 to \$200 for the second offense, from \$200 to \$400 for the third offense and from \$400 to \$600 for the fourth and each subsequent offense.

For residential alarms, fines will increase from \$25 to \$50 for the second offense, from \$50 to \$150 for the third offense and from \$100 to \$400 for the fourth and each subsequent offense.

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