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False Alarm Update: Second California City Considers Total Verified Response

Feb 28, 2005, SIMI VALLEY, Calif. -- The city council in the Southern California city of Simi Valley will be considering whether to enact a verified alarm response policy, joining Fremont, Calif., with verified response policies in the state. Police in the Ventura County city, about 40 miles northwest of Los Angeles, say that 98 percent of the 3,805 alarm calls it received last year were false and the new policy is needed for the department to better deal with real emergencies.

Under the new policy, burglar alarms will need to be verified by a video feed, an eyewitness or a private security guard before police will respond, according to the *Ventura County Star*. The Simi Valley City Council will hear the new ordinance on April 4 and may vote on its passage.

“Our whole goal is to provide a better service to the community as a whole,” Sgt. Stephanie Shannon, Simi Valley Police spokeswoman, told the *Star*. “A minimum of two officers are taken away from legitimate-type calls to handle these false alarms.”

Simi Valley, with a population of around 117,000, would be the second California city to switch to a total verified response policy. Fremont will [become to first total verified response city in California on March 20](#). Los Angeles police [do not immediatly respond to a burglar alarm at an alarm customer with more than two false alarms in a year](#) unless it is verified at the source, but will still dispatch the call to all units who can respond at their discretion.

In other false alarm news ...

OLYMPIA, Wash.: A law passed last July that allows for no free false alarms and alarm registration goes into effect in April in the state capital of Washington. Under the new alarm ordinance, which takes effect April 1, alarm owners will be required to register their systems to expect an automatic police response. Alarms at unregistered locations will require verification at the source before police respond.

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Residential customers will pay \$25 to register, while commercial and government customers pay \$35. Alarm companies will be responsible for registering their customers with the police and collecting the registration fee.

The new law also includes fines for every false alarm — \$60 for each false burglar alarm and \$200 for each false panic alarm.

LUBBOCK, Texas: The police chief in Lubbock, Texas, says an alarm ordinance that levies a permit fee for excessive false alarms has cut such false dispatches 44 percent since it went into effect in 2001. Police Chief Claude Jones told KCBD-TV there were 13,805 false alarms in 2004 compared to 25,000 before the new ordinance took effect in 2000. Under the ordinance, alarm owners are forced to pay a \$50 fee for an alarm permit after more than three false alarms in a calendar year.

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