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San Jose Police Department

Verified Response Protocol Information

The San Jose Police Department has long maintained the practice of responding to reports of audible alarms reported both by alarm companies and residents. As the number of installed residential alarms has grown throughout the years, the demand placed on police resources dedicated to alarm responses has grown commensurately.



As is the case with many law enforcement agencies throughout the nation, the San Jose Police Department has seen its staffing levels reduced substantially, necessitating the reprioritization, modification, and elimination of certain police services.

In 2008, The San Jose Police Department conducted a study of false alarms in the City and found that over 98% of all alarm calls were indeed false alarms. The cost of these false alarms to the Department was \$662,000. In 2010, the Department responded to 12,450 alarm calls throughout the City. While this represented approximately 6% of all calls for service, it was the second largest percentile category of all call types. Only two arrests resulted from these alarm calls and only 113 resulted in police reports being generated. It is clear that false alarm responses place a significant demand on police resources.

Consequently, the San Jose Police Department will no longer respond to alarms solely on the request of alarm monitoring companies.

In keeping with emerging standards successfully implemented by law enforcement agencies throughout the country, the Department will adopt a Verified Response Protocol. This change will occur on **January 1, 2012**. While this will result in fewer police responses to reports of alarms, police will continue to respond to panic and robbery alarms. The Department will also respond to "verified" alarms. Verification may come in the form of sound, video, or eyewitness accounts that indicate a crime is occurring and thereby constituting a "verified" response. Alarm verification can also be accomplished when an alarm company agent, property owner or any witness is at the scene of an activation and affirms that police are needed because a crime is occurring or has occurred.

This practice will remain under continuous review and will be modified as necessary to provide our residents with the best possible service while allowing for the optimal allocation of police resources. In conjunction with these changes to our response protocol, the Department will continue to evaluate amendments to the current fine structure and further study the adoption of an alarm ordinance requiring alarm registration.

One of our primary goals associated to this change in our service delivery model is to redirect those police resources currently being utilized to handle false alarm calls toward more proactive policing activities. Through these efforts, the San Jose Police Department will meet with increased success in addressing the very crime problems that alarms are ostensibly intended to prevent.

The San Jose Police Department remains committed to providing outstanding police services to all residents and visitors of the City.

Verified Response Protocol Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why are officers no longer responding to alarm calls that are not verified in the City?

A. Our primary goal with this change in our service delivery model is to redirect those police resources currently being utilized to handle false alarm calls toward more proactive policing activities.

Q. How many false alarm calls were there in San Jose in 2010?

A. 12,450 (98.4% of which were false)

Q. When will this new protocol take effect?

A. January 1, 2012

Q. Are there any additional costs to alarm owners?

A. No. In fact, this will be a savings to most homeowners because it will reduce the amount of false alarms responses that result in a fine.

Q. When will an officer respond to my alarm?

A. Officers will be immediately dispatched to all robbery, duress and panic alarms. All other alarms will have to be verified prior to officers being dispatched.

Q. What does verified mean?

A. An alarm has been activated and a person is on site to verify that a crime may be occurring or has occurred.

An alarm company is monitoring the premises by using either remote audio or video and believes that a crime may be occurring or has occurred.

Q. Will there be an increase in burglaries now that officers will no longer respond to alarm calls?

A. Of all the agencies that have gone to a Verified Response Protocol, none have seen any significant increase in the rate of burglaries.



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