



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
City of Duluth Police Department

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DATE: 12/28/2009

NATURE OF INCIDENT: New Alarm Ordinance Reminders for the New Year

CASE NO.:

INCIDENT DATE :12/28/2009

INCIDENT TIME:

INCIDENT LOCATION:

SUBJECT: New Alarm Ordinance Reminders for the New Year

BY: Officer Brad Wick, Information Coordinator

The Duluth Police Department hopes a new ordinance governing security alarms will reduce the number of false alarms they respond to each year. Effective January 1, 2010, alarm system users with more than two false alarms in a one year time period will be assessed a false alarm fee. The fee schedule is: \$100 for the third false alarm, \$200 for the fourth, and \$300 for the fifth. Each additional false alarm will increase the fee by \$100.

This new false alarm fee has been enacted to reduce the number of false alarms police respond to, not to generate revenue for the City of Duluth. In 2008, Duluth Police responded to 2389 alarms and of that number, only 11 were valid alarms. Each year, thousands of patrol hours are spent investigating alarm reports that turn out to be false alarms.

The three major causes of false alarms are 1) user errors, 2) installation or service errors, and 3) equipment failures. Eighty percent of all false alarms are human error and fifty percent of these occur when the alarm is being turned on/off. To curb false alarms, the Duluth Police Department and the Minnesota Electronic Security and Technology Association suggest the following FALSE ALARM PREVENTION tips:

- Insist your alarm company uses Enhanced Call Verification (ECV) by making at least two calls to verify every alarm signal, except fire, duress or hold-up alarms, before calling the police.
- Carefully review your alarm monitoring company's procedures for canceling accidental alarms. Insist that written instructions are provided to you. Do NOT call 911 if you accidentally set off your alarm.
- Educate every person authorized to enter your home or business on how the system works and that they have the appropriate pass code. Insist on getting thorough training on operating the system from your alarm company.
- Know how to clear a wrong code if you make a mistake on the keypad.
- Choose a system that is tolerant of pets. If pets run free in the house, you should ask your alarm company for a motion detector that accommodates pets. Some dog barks can activate older glass break detectors.
- Before selecting a system, ask the alarm company about equipment with proven low false alarm rates.
- Keep doors and windows locked when the system is armed. Doors and windows must be tight fitting, and contacts should be free of paint and varnish.
- Use deadbolt locks.
- Have your security company check and service your system regularly. Routine maintenance can help prevent many false alarms. Make sure the main control panel battery is replaced periodically by your alarm company, typically every three to five years.
- Upgrade old alarm systems.
- Contact your alarm company immediately if you are having any problem with the alarm system, including any unexplained signal.
- If the alarm is false, the alarm company must immediately attempt to cancel the police dispatch.
- Ensure that your alarm company has someone on call 24/7 for service or to answer questions.
- Make sure the alarm company has written instructions about the person or persons it is supposed to call.
- Follow your alarm company's instructions on testing your system. Don't test it by setting it off prior to notifying your alarm company.
- Ask if your alarm company is a member of your state alarm association and has proper licenses.