

**Morgan Hill Police Department
January 16, 2009**

The following is the analysis section of an internal memo prepared for the implementation of an alarm registration program. The information was gleaned from over 45 responses from CPCA member organizations.

Analysis

Based on a survey of California cities through the CPCA e-mail network, I learned that many cities throughout California have alarm registration programs. Five of the 45 respondents represented cities from Santa Clara County and three of those five had active alarm registration programs in place. The other two were considering adding them in the future and requested the completed research. Other nearby cities in Alameda, Santa Cruz and Solano Counties also had active alarm registration programs. Many of these cities expressed the benefits of the program to be a reduction in the number of false alarm calls, a method to recover the cost associated with responding to alarms, and a vehicle for maintaining an accurate database of contact information in the event the police department needs to contact the person responsible for the business or residence.

The methods and fees for registering and responding to alarms are quite varied. The only common theme is that all respondents require registration for both commercial and residential alarms except for one city that does not have any commercial locations. The fees charged for registration range from \$0.00 to \$75 per year. Some of the agencies require the payment annually, where as, others charge it as a one time fee.

Similarly, how agencies address false alarms of registered and unregistered addresses is equally as varied. Although the program has shown to decrease the number of false alarms, false alarms from registered locations still occur. Agencies commonly address false alarms by charging for the police response using a sliding scale based on the number of responses in one calendar year. The fees for false alarm response vary from \$25 to \$1500 based on the agency, number of responses in the year, and the number of false alarms that are allowed prior to charging. Most agencies allow for 1-2 false alarms a year; however, one allowed for eight a year and others were 2 per quarter.

The most common method to address false alarms from unregistered addresses was to respond, confirm a false alarm and then send a letter requesting the owner to register the alarm or pay the false alarm response fee. This method has shown good success at motivating the owner to register the alarm in lieu of the false alarm charge. Other agencies either do not respond to unregistered alarms or respond and send a letter asking for compliance without charging.

It is interesting to note that the National Burglar and Fire Alarm Association and the False Alarm Reduction Association have drafted a model burglar alarm ordinance. The ordinance recommends the implementation of an alarm registration program.