



Hawk Security Systems, Inc.

We'll Keep an Eye on the Creeps so You can Get your Sleep

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Nuisance Alarms

Having served the City of Harrisonburg for over 32 years in the electronic security industry, I am in agreement that there are too many nuisance alarm activations. What is a nuisance alarm or as Lt. Chris Rush defines them a "false alarm"? I believe it can be defined as a system that has called in a possible alarm condition seeking attention from law enforcement personnel. This could be activation by a new employee, a neighbor coming over to feed the parrot, water leaking into security or fire devices, severe storms, faulty equipment or improperly installed equipment, an actual illegal entry in which the perpetrator has fled before the respondents arrived.

As an electronic security professional, we are in the public safety and loss-prevention business. Here in our city, electronic security systems are being installed not only by local companies, but also companies from out of state, new cable and utility companies just entering the industry, and home owners installing devices themselves.

As a taxpayer, what is the cost of these nuisance or false alarms? Or should we rather ask, what is the cost to the city taxpayer without these systems? The number of actual property and life safety crimes would increase and the amount we taxpayers spend on investigations would increase. According to the National Institute of Justice, using DNA: "The full report contains in-depth analyses of the costs from each of the test sites, but here is the bottom line: On average — across the five test sites — using DNA to solve a property crime cost an additional \$1,400 to collect and process DNA evidence, \$4,502 to identify a suspect (who would not otherwise have been identified) and \$14,169 to arrest a suspect (who would not otherwise have been arrested)." <http://www.nij.gov/journals/261/Pages/dna-solves-property-crimes.aspx> Not to mention the cost of the initial investigation and additional manpower it would take to investigate.

I would rather have our law enforcement personnel respond to an activation in which the perpetrator has fled and have that labeled a "false alarm" than to have a customer sustain extensive damage, a loss of family treasures, the violation of one's sanctuary, or the possible harm inflicted upon a city resident by a bandit. Included within this file of "false alarms" is also if a customer accidentally leaves a door unlocked an alarm will sound if someone tries to enter illegally and the siren will sound scaring away the perpetrator, therefore eliminating the cost and nuisance of an illegal entry investigation.

Having been part of this growing community for some time, I like to think that we in the electronic security industry are helping law enforcement, municipalities, insurance companies, business owners and home owners in reducing loss and increasing personal security.

Respectfully,

Ralph Weller