

## WELCOME!

With Police policy on alarm response and keyholding changing all the time, this issue of Connections will give you an up-to-date overview to ensure you know where you and your business stand.

We do audit your details twice a year but take the opportunity to check your organisation's keyholding arrangements.

- Who are your two dedicated keyholders?
- Are they still working for you?
- Can they reach the site in 20 minutes?
- Are you happy for them to be dealing with high risk, late night call outs?

**Remember three false alarms and you're off the Police register, read on to find out more.**

*the Cerberus Team*

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## IMMEDIATE? SOMETIME? NEVER? POLICE RESPONSE POLICY EXPLAINED!

The Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland (ACPO), who specify Police Force / Constabulary Service guidelines, introduced a new policy in 2000 on Police Response. This policy has been reviewed and is now referred to as the ACPO Policy on Police Response to Security Systems (April 2006).

It states that the Police Force will only attend monitored intruder alarms that 'confirm' alarm activations, whereas previously the Police would respond to the first activation without requiring confirmation.

Normally, an alarm is considered confirmed when a second detection device is activated during the same intrusion. This verifies that there is a definite movement at the premises and therefore there is less chance of the activation being a false alarm.

When the Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) receives the first activation, they are able to notify a keyholder but are unable to notify the Police. The Police are notified when the ARC receives (confirms) the second activation. This is classed as Police Response Level One.

There are three levels of Police Response:



### LEVEL ONE – Immediate Response

All monitored intruder alarm systems are assigned a Level One status when they are first installed i.e. the Police respond immediately when the ARC has confirmed the activation (as detailed above).



### LEVEL TWO – Immediate Police Response, dependant upon available resources

Although most constabularies no longer employ this, Level Two Police response was used to prioritise a Police response over other incidents occurring at the same time.

A Level Two Police Response means that the Police will attend as soon as possible when the ARC alerts them, depending on the resources available to them at that time.



### LEVEL THREE – No Police attendance unless an offence is witnessed as taking place

Police will not attend a Level Three alarm unless a member of the public contacts them to say that they have witnessed a crime taking place. This level of response may affect the insurance cover of the property. Systems will remain at Level Three status until they have been free from false call-outs for a period of over three months and only after they have been upgraded to meet the latest Police requirements. Even after response has been re-instated, it will only be to confirmed activations.

### REMEMBER

Police policy requires that you have at least two keyholders who:

- are trained to operate the intruder alarm system
- are telephone subscribers
- have adequate means to attend the premises at all hours
- have access to all relevant parts of the premises
- can attend within 20 minutes of receiving the initial alarm activation.

Persistent failure to attend within 20 minutes can lead to withdrawal of Police Response.

**If you run an "in-house" keyholding facility – do all of your keyholders comply with the above?**

## NO POLICE RESPONSE AFTER 3 FALSE ALARMS

Three false alarms in any rolling 12-month period will mean the automatic suspension of police response until you carry out specified rectification measures – this may even mean the complete replacement or upgrade of an older alarm system.

*But what is classed as a false alarm?*

The definition of a false alarm includes an alarm activation, which could generate a police response and is not a result of:

- A criminal or attempted attack on the protected premises, equipment or signal transmission line.
- The Emergency Services acting in the normal execution of their duties.
- A call from a PA (Personal Attack) system which was made with good intent.

Activations from detectors with no apparent damage or entry to premises and line faults will be considered false alarms unless proved otherwise.

In addition, the following provisions are also highlighted within the Policy:

- Failure of key holders to attend when requested on three occasions in a rolling 12-month period will result in the withdrawal of police response for a period of three months.
- PA (Personal Attack) will have its own false activation history and will be liable to reduction or removal of police response.

▶▶▶ Find out how to prevent false alarms – see over. ▶▶▶

## HOW TO PREVENT FALSE ALARMS

When an activated alarm signal reaches the Alarm Receiving Centre filtering techniques are applied before the emergency services are contacted but it is important that the number of false alarms is minimised so as not to compromise police attendance to the site.

### WHAT ARE THE MAIN CAUSES OF FALSE ALARMS?

- The alarm system is not being operated correctly.
- Windows and doors are not being properly secured.
- The alarm is being set with people still in the building.
- Objects / movement in front of the movement detectors.

### PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

- Ensure all users are trained on how to operate the system.
- Ensure all doors and windows are locked securely when the system is set.
- Check to make sure that the sensors are not obstructed.
- Ensure that your system receives regular maintenance checks.
- Advise your alarm company and key holding company if there are any alterations to your building / home or contents that might affect the system operation.
- Upgrade your system to include alarm confirmation technology.

## Intruder Alarm Monitoring: What are my options?

If you are looking to install an intruder alarm system, there are two key ways to monitor it.

### PASSIVE MONITORING

Your burglar alarm system is connected to an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) via a dedicated phone line using a Digital Communicator or Speech Dialler. When an alarm is triggered, the monitoring centre receives notification and calls the Police.

However, if the phone line is cut or damaged, the alarm signal cannot reach a monitoring centre. Usually adopted by small businesses or businesses within a secure building, this kind of system requires a dedicated phone line.

### ACTIVE MONITORING

Active monitoring is a step up from the previous option and is more suited to larger organisations or companies with high-risk assets. This type of service also connects your burglar alarm system to an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) via a phone line as well as actively checking that the phone line is always there and active.

One of the types of Active Monitoring that is available is the service that BT offers called **redcare**.

With BT **redcare's** continuous alarm monitoring service your alarm activation will be delivered to the Alarm Receiving Centre. If an intruder cuts the telephone line, **redcare** will relay a signal to the ARC to ensure your property is not left unprotected.

Unlike other alarm monitoring services, **redcare** both alerts the Alarm Receiving Centre when it detects a line cut AND provides encryption to prevent the substitution of equipment or "spoofing" (emulation) of line conditions.

## 'Confirmed' or 'Not Confirmed' – That is the Question!

### Cerberus' guide to 'confirmation' technology

#### NEW alarm systems will only receive a Police response to activations that are 'Confirmed'.

Because of this it is vital that any new alarm system is designed and installed professionally to ensure a break-in creates a 'Confirmed' event and guarantees Police attendance. Likewise it is vital that the correct form of confirmation technology is fitted to suit the premises.

There are three types of intruder alarm confirmation:

#### 1. SEQUENTIAL CONFIRMATION

The most common form of confirmation technology and the most effective, if a system has been designed professionally.

Sequential confirmation occurs when two separate detection devices identify an intruder within 30 minutes of each other. With a system that has two signal paths to the Alarm Receiving Centre, the loss of one of the monitored paths would count as the first activation.

#### 2. AUDIO CONFIRMATION

Audio confirmation works by using microphone technology. Small, highly sensitive microphones enable the Alarm Receiving Centre to listen for suspicious noises.

For privacy reasons the microphones are only active when the intruder alarm is switched on. If someone breaks into the property, the Alarm Receiving Centre can listen-in to the site immediately before, during and after the break-in to provide audible confirmation that there is an intruder in the property.

#### 3. VISUAL CONFIRMATION

Visual confirmation works in the same way as audible confirmation but uses CCTV cameras instead of microphones, enabling the Alarm Receiving Centre staff to see, instead of hear, what has caused the activation. This can either be achieved by small lenses being incorporated within the movement sensors or, through integrating the intruder alarm with a professional CCTV system (this may be an existing system).

Visual confirmation is often the most expensive and it is vital that both the CCTV system and the intruder alarm system are designed professionally and in conjunction with each other.

### JARGON BUSTER

'UNCONFIRMED' EVENT – when only a single detector in a building goes off.

'CONFIRMED' EVENT – when the initial alarm is supported by a secondary alarm confirmation.

Why not ask our Alarm Consultant to do a FREE survey and make sure your system is up-to-date. Call 0870 7706811 and make an appointment.