

April 14, 2006

Dear Modesto Alarm Owner:

The Modesto Police Department has been responding to burglar alarm calls for decades. In instances where an Officer responds to an alarm call and catches a burglar on site, for us it's like hitting a home run in the World Series. Cops love catching burglars. Unfortunately, a problem exists because **99% of the alarm calls we respond to are false alarms**. This number has held steady for many years and continues even today. Officers are most often responding to burglar alarms caused by operator error, faulty equipment, pets, store banners, cleaning crews, and spiders. Only 1% of the time Officers respond to a legitimate burglar alarm where a crime has actually occurred.

The time spent in responding to false alarms represents about **five full-time Officer positions**. Clearly, responding to false alarms impacts our ability to respond to real crimes and problems. For more than 13 years, we've tried ways to reduce the number of false alarms without success. We need to utilize our limited staffing resources, responding to legitimate calls.

In 1993, in an effort to reduce false alarms, the Modesto Police Department instituted the "Model States Plan" of false alarm reductions. This plan was jointly developed by the alarm industry and law enforcement, and was to have a significant impact on false alarms. In reality, false alarms only increased.

In 2003, the City Council approved an increase for false alarms fines and our request to stop responding to frequent false alarm locations. Since that time, we have not seen any sort of significant reduction. To date, we still respond to about 800 alarms a month and 99% are false. Alarm calls represent the single highest volume call for service received by the Police Department, accounting for just over 11% of all calls for service. The status quo of "respond & bill" doesn't work. What bills do accomplish is making a lot of residents and business owners irritated at the Police Department. We have to do something different. We need something that *solves* the problem, not just *manages* it.

Effective **September 1, 2006**, the Modesto Police Department will institute a policy of "Verified Response" to all burglar alarm calls. Verified Response will require the alarm or monitoring company to verify there is criminal activity or unusual occurrence at the location of the alarm before the police will be dispatched. This verification can be done with a video or audio feed, with an

eyewitness, or by the alarm company hiring private security to check out the location. No police will be dispatched until there is a verified problem.

Please be advised that **panic, robbery (hold-up), medical** or **duress** alarms will **not** be included in the verified response policy. These types of alarms will continue to be treated as high priority calls for service by the Police Department.

MOST IMPORTANTLY:

THE MODESTO POLICE DEPARTMENT DISCOURAGES YOU FROM RESPONDING TO VERIFY AN ALARM. THIS IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF YOUR ALARM COMPANY. THERE IS A POTENTIAL DANGER TO RESPONDING TO AN ALARM ACTIVATION AND ENCOUNTERING A SUSPECT, OR A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER WHO MIGHT HAPPEN UPON THE SCENE AND CONFUSE YOU WITH A CRIMINAL. INSIST THAT YOUR ALARM COMPANY TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALARM VERIFICATION.

Verified Response has been in effect in about 28 cities throughout the United States including Las Vegas, Salt Lake City, and Fremont. Verified Response has proven to be highly effective in saving police resources and improving service because alarm companies are required to take greater responsibility for their products and services. In every city that I'm aware of, service and response times have improved and burglary rates have not risen due to Verified Response. None of the "scare tactics" predictions made by the alarm industry have come true. Not one city has abandoned Verified Response and gone back to the old system. I have studied Verified Response for years and I wouldn't implement this policy if it weren't the right thing to do.

I encourage you to look at the facts for yourself. Don't be fooled by the scare tactics that the alarm industry might employ. We've posted a number of articles on our website. They discuss Verified Response in much greater detail. To view or download them, go to www.modestopolice.com and click on the "Alarms" button.

False alarms have a very negative financial and staffing impact on the department with virtually no return in apprehension of suspects or reduction in crime. I'm not "anti-alarm." Customers must demand better quality and reliability. How can we as consumers of the alarm industry's service be satisfied with a failure rate of 99%? Would we accept that from any other product in our homes or businesses?

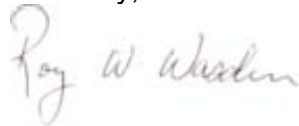
A reliable alarm has its place as a part of an overall system (locks, lighting, fencing, etc.) used to defend a home or business. What we need and want is

an alarm industry that has an accuracy rate of 99%, not less than 1%. The industry has already signaled their reluctance and outright opposition to change. In order to improve quality, consumers have to demand it. A reliable, verified alarm benefits everyone because they deter or detect real crimes and problems. Unreliable and unverified alarms only benefit the alarm companies.

We have an opportunity to fix a decades-old problem with an innovative but proven solution. This will be partnership between the police and private enterprise that improves services and reduces costs. A verified response policy can be beneficial for all parties. We now have some choices: we can improve or we can do nothing. But traditional methods will continue to get traditional results.

Thank you for taking the time to look over this important information and I hope that you will understand the situation that we are facing at this time. As the Chief of Police, I must make very difficult decisions. I am confident that this change is right for Modesto and will improve the quality of your alarm services. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roy W. Wasden".

ROY W. WASDEN
CHIEF OF POLICE