

DEMOGRAPHICS

In the United States, there are 68,000,000 homes with hardwired telephone systems and this does not include additional cell phone accounts.

ALARM SYSTEMS

Purchasers of an alarm system always expect a police response if the alarm is activated, even though they bought the system from a private alarm company with no link to a police department.

Estimates show between 18 and 21 million security alarm systems in the United States. The security alarm industry adds roughly 1.5 million new security monitoring systems each year. The average security system costs more than \$1,600 and the average monthly monitoring fee is \$24 according to alarm industry statistics.

60% of all new systems are in residences and only 1 out of every 9 U.S. residences already have security systems and alarms. The recent trend of wiring new residential construction with alarm capacity has the potential for significantly increasing the number of alarm calls in the coming decade. 40% percent of all new systems are on commercial and institutional premises but only 1 out of every 7 U.S. businesses have security systems and alarms. It is unclear how many non-alarm calls to police are actually false but the typical costs of responding to burglar alarms include which of the following:

1. Personnel costs of police call-takers and dispatchers;
2. Personnel, equipment and training costs of responding officers, along with those of any backup personnel;
3. Personnel costs associated with analyzing false alarms;
4. Software, hardware, office space, and equipment costs for false alarm management;
5. Administrative and staff costs of notifications, permitting, billing, and education programs;
6. Costs of developing, printing and distributing publications to educate the public and alarm companies about false alarms;
7. Lost-opportunity costs, since police are unavailable to work on actual crime problems; and
8. Costs associated with call displacement, because other 911 calls take longer to respond to.

FALSE ALARMS

The false burglar alarm problem exhibits some similarities to each of the related problems listed below:

- False 911 calls
- 911 hang-ups.
- False fire alarms.
- False vehicle alarms.
- False robbery alarms.
- Noise complaints about audible alarms.

Even those police agencies with recently enacted false alarm policies and ordinances should revisit their approach; otherwise, they might find their workload further consumed with false alarm calls. One study suggests that 20 percent of alarm systems trigger 80 percent of false alarms. False alarms may also generate calls for service from neighbors concerning noise.

THE COSTS OF FALSE ALARMS

Between 94 and 98 percent of alarm calls are false. Nationwide, false alarms account for 10 to 25 percent of all calls to police. In the United States alone, solving the problem of false alarms would by itself relieve 35,000 officers from providing an essentially private service.

- In 1997, Fort Worth, Texas, police spent \$1,500,000.00 responding to false burglar alarms.

- In Los Angeles in 1998, police received 3,000 alarm calls per week, with a yearly average false alarm rate of approximately 97%, representing the equivalent of 123 officers working 8 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- Every year, Chicago police respond to more than 300,000 burglar alarms, 98 percent of them false, which translates to the equivalent of 195 full-time police officers.
- In Salt Lake City, of the thousands of alarm calls responded to during 1999, only 23 - or three-tenths of 1 percent (0.3%) - turned out to result from crimes.

Each false alarm requires approximately 20 minutes of police time, usually for two officers. This costs the public as much as \$1.5 billion per year in police time spent conducting problem-solving of documented crime and disorder, reducing repeat calls at crime hot spots, and engaging the community in public safety concerns.

Alarm systems are not cost-free to the community because up to 98 percent of alarms are false but still require the time and resources of a police response provided at the taxpayers' expense.

In Salt Lake City, after enactment of a limited-response ordinance in 2000, the first few months showed an 88% reduction in the number of alarm calls.

The Las Vegas Metro Police Department adopted a limited-response approach in 1992, changing departmental policy to require alarm company visual verification before dispatch. Las Vegas burglary rates declined by 8% for the 3 years following the change in policy. Las Vegas dispatches on burglary alarms dropped from over 100,000 per year (before 1992) to less than 10,000 a year (in 2000), a 90 % reduction, despite population growth from 678,190 in 1991 to over 1 million in 2000.

In the United States, in 1998, police responded to approximately 38 million alarm activations. Most of the 1998 alarm activations were burglar alarms. The estimated annual cost, in 1998, for the police to respond to approximately 38 million alarm activations was \$1.5 billion.

BURGLAR ALARMS

Burglary remains one of the most frequent crimes, with a national clearance rate averaging below 15%.

Burglar alarms may account for as much as 90% of the alarm workload and the reliability of alarm systems in general is between 2% and 6% percent when measured by using the industries false alarm rates according to a review of police data from several cities.

Urban areas have higher residential burglary rates than suburban and rural areas. According to The Bureau of Justice Assistance annual crime-victim survey, which does not include commercial burglary, the residential burglary rate in 1999 for urban areas was 46.2 per 1,000 households, compared with 27.1 for suburban and 32.6 for rural households. Residential burglaries tend to concentrate in and around low-income areas, victimizing low-income households.

In 1999, households with annual incomes of \$14,999 or less had two to three times the rate of burglary as those with incomes above \$50,000, and burglary victimization rates were highest for households with incomes of less than \$7,500.

ALARM MONITORING COMPANIES

About 15 million security alarm systems in the United States are monitored.

If alarms are highly reliable, the public benefits from police catching burglars, taking them out of circulation and reducing the risk of burglary for everyone in the community. However, if alarms are unreliable, then automatic police response becomes a personal service to the alarm owner, providing no benefits to the public at large.

Politicians fearful of alienating their local security industry often initially support police response to all alarms. However, the monitoring companies they are supporting may not be local at all. The alarm company mergers of the 1990s' also mean that alarm systems originally installed and serviced by one company may now be serviced by another.

A company in Texas can monitor the alarms of tens of thousands of customers in Utah or other distant states but at what level of response? A few companies still respond as part of their contract with customers, but this is rare.

For the purposes of general discussion, it should be assumed that the alarm industry has the responsibility to improve the quality of its equipment, more accurately install devices and increase user knowledge of its product; all of which reduce false alarm calls.

TELESPY™ OVERVIEW



Telephone & Portable, Intrusion Detection System

The newly patented TeleSpy™ allows you to freely (1) place your TeleSpy™ phone in a sensitive location, (2) aim it at the location you want protected, (3) arm it and (4) have it call your personal cell phone (or any other phone) repeatedly anytime there is an intrusion into your private area. This is possible by combining a standard telephone, an intrusion sensor, a highly sensitive microphone, an auto-dial system and eliminating all set-up and installation fees and recurring or monthly monitoring fees.)

Q: What can a TeleSpy™ do that most burglar alarm systems cannot do?

You personally verify a "crime-in-progress" with your TeleSpy™ and move to the top of the Police's priority dispatching. Officers come to you before unverified alarm calls, and personal or property investigations.

The TeleSpy's unique capability to enable you to listen in and verify a crime in progress, using both audio and repetition verification, also places your call for help in a higher priority than all other non-verified alarm or monitoring system calls for help.

The TeleSpy™ enables individuals to listen in to a burglary of their protected area or property, verify the intruder as a friend or foe from a safe distance, and call it in as "a verified crime in progress."

Most police departments prioritize "a verified crime in progress" call for help absolutely as the highest priority (behind only an "Officer Down" call) and dispatch help before and ahead of all other personal or property crimes or investigations.

Q: What will a TeleSpy™ do when triggered by an intruder?

- A. A TeleSpy™ will call a Big sister's cell phone and verify that her little brother is snooping through the dresser drawers in her bedroom.
- B. A TeleSpy™ will call a Dad's office and verify that a burglar is breaking into the lake house.
- C. A TeleSpy™ will call a Mom's cell phone and verify that the latch-key child is back at home on time.
- D. A TeleSpy™ will call the Boss's cell phone and verify that his secretary is rummaging through his private papers in his locked office.
- E. A TeleSpy™ will call a traveler's cell phone and verify that someone is in his or her hotel room.
- F. A TeleSpy™ will call a property owner's security officer's cell phone and verify that someone is somewhere they shouldn't be.
- G. A TeleSpy™ will call a store owner's cell phone and verify that a customer is inside the reception area.
- H. A TeleSpy™ will call a Department manager's office phone and verify that someone is inside the "off-limits" computers' server room or vault.
- I. A TeleSpy™ will call a security guard's cell phone and verify that someone is inside the building after hours.
- J. A TeleSpy™ will call a wage-earning Mom's cell phone and verify that the Maid did arrive to clean her home.
- K. A TeleSpy™ will call a Little Brother's cell phone and verify that his Big Sister is wrecking his bedroom as revenge for him snooping through the dresser drawers in her bedroom.
- L. All of the above, and more. (Correct Answer!)***