

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Verified Response Policy

Why is the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office no longer going to automatically respond to my alarm if it activates?

Your Sheriff's Office continually strives to utilize tax dollars in the best possible way to serve our citizens. In order to provide services to our citizens in the best possible manner, we continually examine your Sheriff's Office's ability to address the priorities of our citizens; what are we doing, why are we doing it, and can we improve on what we're doing? This is especially true in difficult economic times when calls for service increase and the numbers of deputies decreases.

In 2009 your Sheriff's Office responded to 376 alarms. The false alarm rate was 97.5% and of the few valid alarms, none involved criminal activity.

When all patrol shifts are filled, your Sheriff's Office typically has three patrol deputies covering the nearly 1000 square miles of Lincoln County. Each deputy carries a high case load and there is little time to devote the investigative time our citizens deserve. Careful prioritization of deputies' availability must be made to best serve all of our citizens public safety needs.

If we don't have enough deputies, why not charge for false alarms and use the money to cover the costs of responding to false alarms?

Your Sheriff's Office does charge for false alarms in some instances. However, false alarms continue to occur whether there is a charge for them or not. In 2009 the revenue from false alarms and alarm fees totaled \$2,320.

Is my homeowner insurance going to increase?

Other agencies who have implemented Verified Response report that insurance companies are not raising rates.

Are burglars now going to come to Lincoln County and steal us blind?

There are numerous agencies who have implemented verified response, some include:

- Las Vegas Metro Police Department
- Lane County, Oregon Sheriff's Office
- Arvada, Colorado Police Department
- West Valley, Utah Police Department
- Salt Lake City Police Department
- Taylorsville, Utah Police Department
- Henderson, Nevada Police Department
- Eugene, Oregon Police Department
- Victoria, British Columbia Police Department
- Murray, Utah Police Department

- Salem, Oregon Police Department
- Winnipeg, Canada Police Department
- Yakima, Washington Police Department
- Westminster, Colorado Police Department
- Breckenridge, Colorado Police Department
- Summit County, Colorado Sheriff's Department
- Broomfield, Colorado Police Department
- Lakewood, Colorado Police Department
- South Salt Lake City, Utah Police Department
- Burien, Washington Police Department
- Milwaukee, Wisconsin Police Department
- Bellingham, Washington Police Department
- Aurora, Colorado Police Department
- Marion County, Oregon Sheriff's Office
- Fremont, California Police Department

None of the listed agencies have experienced any significant increase in the rate of burglaries caused by their practice of requiring verified alarms.

There is no correlation between alarms and burglaries. Alarms, as proven throughout the United States, only indicate a problem with the alarm! An activated alarm is not an indication of a burglary since 98% of activated alarms nationwide are false.

The burglary rate in Lincoln County is impacted more by the lack of time deputies have to engage in proactive police work than any alarm response program. Your Deputies don't have much time to respond to and investigate crimes or to do much in the way of preventative patrol. The time spent last year responding to and searching locations where false alarms were activated totaled over 141 hours that could have been spent in more productive police work that would have a direct impact on reducing our overall crime rate.

The assumption that crime will increase if police response is not provided to private alarm systems is simply not true.

Crime has numerous causal factors including:

- Population density and degree of urbanization
- Composition of population particularly youth concentration
- Stability of population including resident's mobility, commuting patterns.
- Modes of transportation
- Economic conditions, including median income, poverty level, and job availability.
- Cultural factors and educational, recreational and religious characteristics.
- Family conditions with respect to divorce and family cohesiveness.
- Effective strength of law enforcement agencies.
- Administrative and investigative emphasis of law enforcement.

- Policies of other components of the criminal justice systems (D.A., judges, probation, prison system)
- Citizen's attitude towards crime
- Crime reporting practices of citizens.

Alarm systems function in two parts, 1) the alarm system itself; 2) remote monitoring of the alarm system.

The basic system consists of all the window and door sensors, interior motion sensors, controllers, local bells/lights/sirens, etc. This is where the signs and decals and evidence of an alarm system offer the greatest detection and deterrence 100% of the time. The alarm industry recommends that every household and business have a basic local alarm system.

"Monitoring" is a secondary add-on service that is intended to report malfunctions or abnormal conditions for alarm company repair and service. Several decades ago, when the alarm industry was experiencing fast growth, it became too costly for the industry to respond to increased number of trouble calls, and by calling them "burglar alarms" the industry could get the police to make those first response calls; and it also added greater perceived value for higher fees to the consumer.

Are people going to die as a result of the deputies not responding?

Intrusion alarms are designed to protect property not people. Alarms featuring panic buttons, duress or robbery buttons are alarms systems to protect people and your Sheriff's Office will still respond to those types of alarms and they will be a high priority response for this Office.

I pay taxes for this service and I expect that my tax dollar will be spent responding to my alarm.

The reality is we have 542 homes and businesses with alarms in our service area of Lincoln County. This includes all of Lincoln County outside the city limits of Newport, Lincoln City, Toledo and Siletz. There are nearly 19,000 remaining homes and businesses your Sheriff's Office serves that are not alarmed.

These homeowners are basically subsidizing a minority number of homeowners with an extra police service that they do not themselves receive. One could actually make the argument that the alarm industry, by default, is contracting government services without approval. Owning and operating an alarm system is a private contract, with a private for-profit firm, for a private service.

Requests for alarm response are the only calls for deputy services where there is zero screening of the call. All other calls for deputy assistance have interaction screening between the police dispatcher and the caller.

If a local trained security company is contracted by local alarm companies to verify alarms, initial response times by this private company may even be faster than your Sheriff's Office can respond. Due to the high volume of calls for service and the number of false alarms, alarms are treated as a low priority call. At certain times it has taken hours for a deputy to respond to the alarm. If a private security company responds and finds a burglary occurred or is in-progress, a deputy will respond.

Why do I need a permit if the police aren't going to respond?

The permit allows an alarm system to be installed. The permit supplies contact and other information to your Sheriff's Office as needed, especially if a deputy responds to an alarm caused by a verified crime.