

PRESENTED BY THE  
***ALARM ASSOCIATION OF  
FLORIDA***



*"Setting a Higher Standard"*

*Preventing False Alarms*  
*or*  
*How to Prevent False Police &  
Fire Dispatches*



The Instructor for this course is:

# *False Alarm Prevention*

- According to the Security Industry Association Coalition *Model Alarm Ordinance* a false alarm dispatch is:

***an alarm dispatch request to the police department when the responding officer finds no evidence of a criminal offense or attempted criminal offense after having completed a timely investigation of the alarm site.***

# Regulations

- City, County, State
- Local Ordinances



# *State Rules & Regulations*

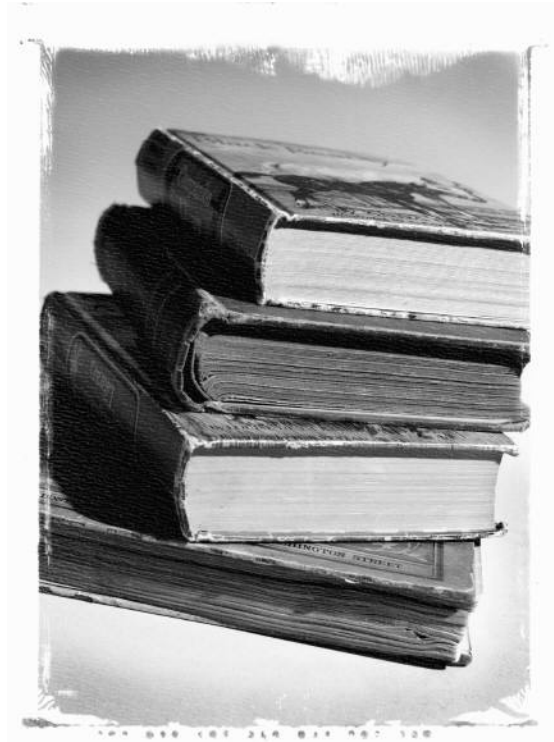
- There are no rules established for central station operations by the state.
- The rules for operation are established by Underwriters Laboratories
- Personnel in a Central station are governed by Florida Statutes (F.S. 489)
- You are in this class to comply with state regulations for required training

# ***Local rules (Local government ordinances)***

- Best example is Boca Raton, and Delray Beach, FL:
  - In Boca and Delray, unless the alarm company is UL listed, and the central station is approved by the city:  
***you may not install or monitor alarms within city limits***

# Industry Standards

- CPO1
- Enhanced Call Verification





# ***National Rules (NFPA Codes)***

- Monitoring of Fire Alarms are governed by NFPA codes.
- The National Fire Alarm Code, NFPA 72, 1996 edition requires a certain response to various types of signals

# Industry Standards, Accepted Practices, & Approved Procedures

NFPA UL FS489 FS633

SIAC Model Alarm Ordinances

Local Building Codes

Local Police and Fire Alarm Regulations

# ***Emergency Forces Dispatching Requirements & Techniques***

- Florida law now requires every Burglar Alarm signal to be verified
- You may not delay a dispatch to a commercial fire alarm signal
- You may verify a residential fire alarm signal
- You must comply with other rules as they are established

# Rules for dispatching Police & Fire Officials

- ✓ Police and Fire officials risk their lives everyday to provide emergency services to the residents of their communities



# *Operating Procedures*

- **Your operating procedures must compliment the local rules and regulations**
- **Customers may not override state law, or local ordinances**

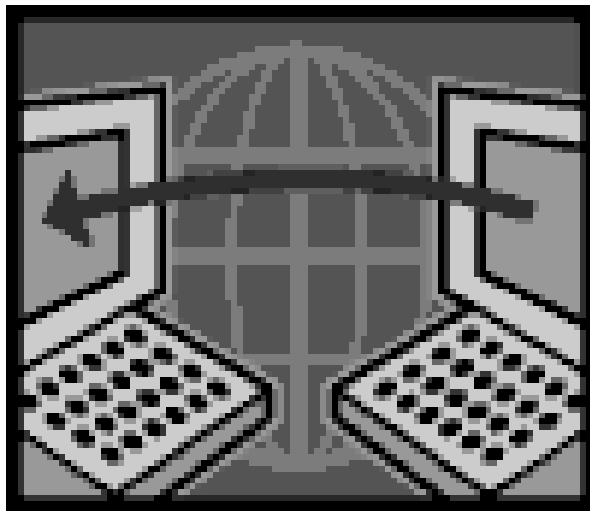
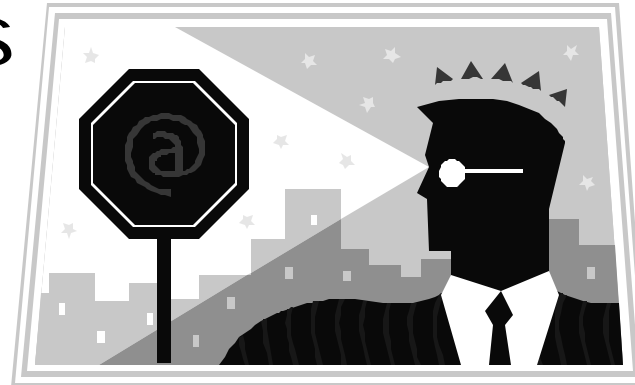
# Industry Programs

- Local Installation Service Company
- Mass Marketing
- Authorized Dealer Program
- Purchase and Lease
- Third Party Monitoring



# Internet Sales

- DO IT YOURSELF-ers
- End User Monitoring



# ***Company policy***

- Every company establishes their own rules and regulations for handling emergencies
- UL merely provides guidelines for the basic operations of a central station
- Central Station Manager should develop and implement these policies



# ***Requirements of the customer***

- Response to certain signals is mandated by the customer
- State law sometimes supercedes the requirements of the customer
  - Example-commercial fire alarm-we are required to notify the authorities even if the customer says they don't want us to dispatch (*NFPA 72, 1996 Edition*)

- **The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) estimates that each alarm system generate 2 alarms per year.**
- **98% of these dispatches are determined to be false alarms**
- **A survey by the CSAA indicated that monitored systems filter out 90% of false activation's**

# Communications

- Telephone Lines
- Cellular
- Radio Relay
- Line Monitor
- Line Protection



# *The Duties of a Central Station*

- **Provide the safety and security their customers expect**
- **To act responsibly**
- **To help avoid unnecessary alarm dispatches**
- **Help reduce false alarms**

# *Training*

- **Most Central Stations train their new employees for at least 40 hours before allowing them to handle alarm signals.**
- **Underwriters Laboratories requires record keeping of all on going training**
- **Florida now requires training for anyone selling, installing or servicing alarm systems**

# ***Why alarm companies are concerned with false alarms***

- Additional Cost
- Appearance of degraded reliability
- Safety
- Customer Good Will
- Attrition

# ***Why alarm users should be concerned with false alarms***

- Increased cost due to false alarm fines
- Possibility of being placed on:

***“No Response”***

- Police may lose faith in the quality of alarm system placing themselves, and the users in danger

# Effects of False Alarms

- Increased central station activity
- Increased follow up costs for
  - service department
  - sales department
  - customer service department
  - productive time diverted to non income producing projects



# Non Response

- Some authorities have enacted ordinances that stop responses after a certain number of false alarms
- Several area have eliminated response to alarm signals entirely

# ***Methods of Reducing False Dispatches***

- ***Verify burglar alarms before dispatching***
- ***Proper data entry of information prior to system "going on line"***
- ***Proper education on the use of system to all who will use the system at the time of installation***
- ***Offer additional training if needed***
- ***Make repairs at no charge***

# Alarms Reduce Crime!!

- Residences with alarm systems were 6 times less likely to be burglarized than homes without security systems<sup>1</sup>
- Monitored systems reduce police dispatches<sup>2</sup>

# ***Interaction with Police and Fire Officials***

- Attitudes of the Police
  - Industry is getting rich on their service
  - Audible alarms do not decrease crime, silent alarms do.
  - Alarm systems increase police workload
  - Alarm industry is not trying to solve the crime
  - Failure rate of alarms is 98%

# Example of Alarm Companies and Police Working Together

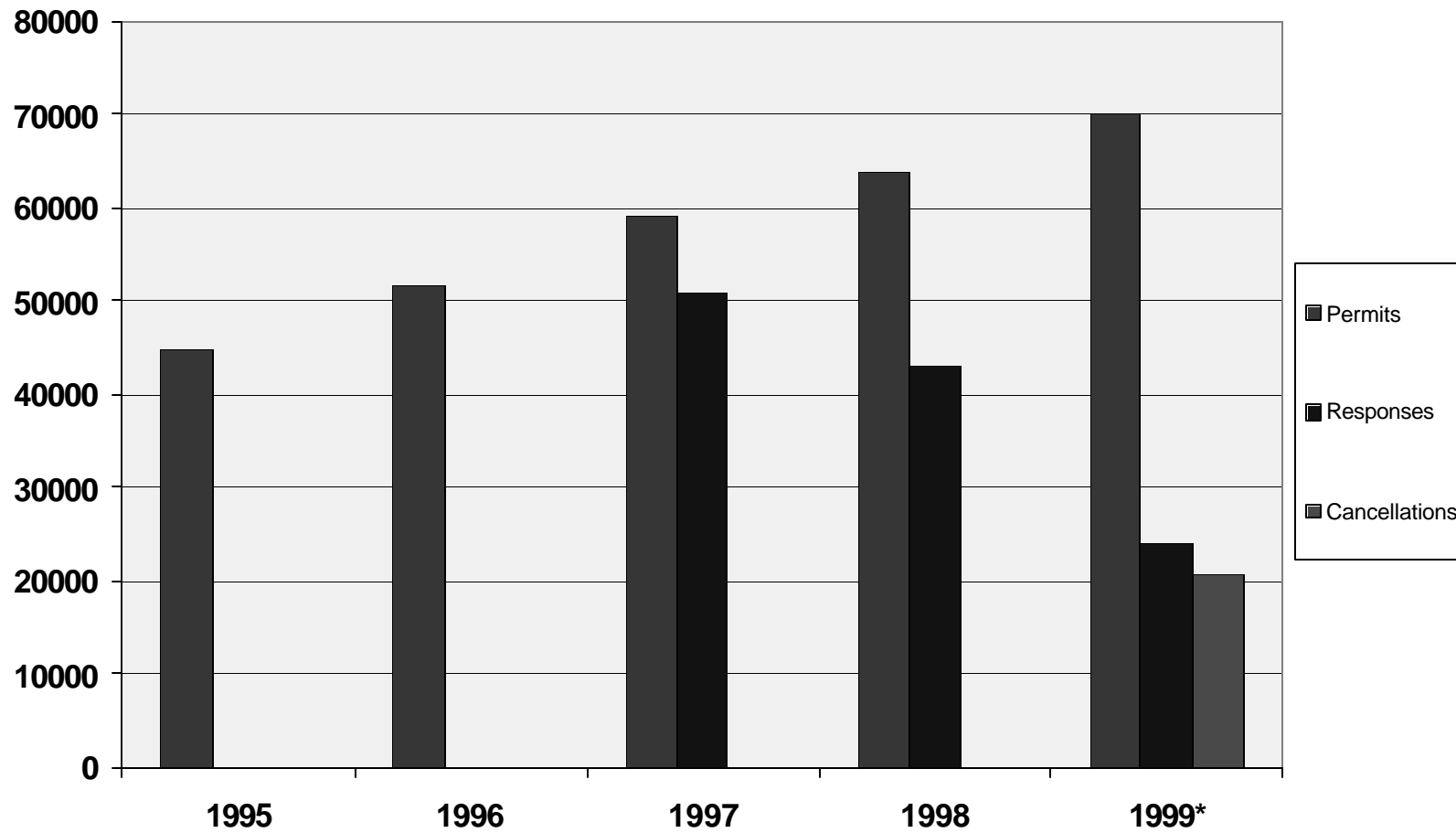
## ■ **Palm Beach County, Florida**

- An Alarm ordinance has been in effect since 1988.
- In 1993 the ordinance was revised
- In 1999 the ordinance was revised again
- In all instances the Alarm Community played an important part in the development of the ordinance.
- As alarm installations increased-the number of police & fire dispatches decreased..... >

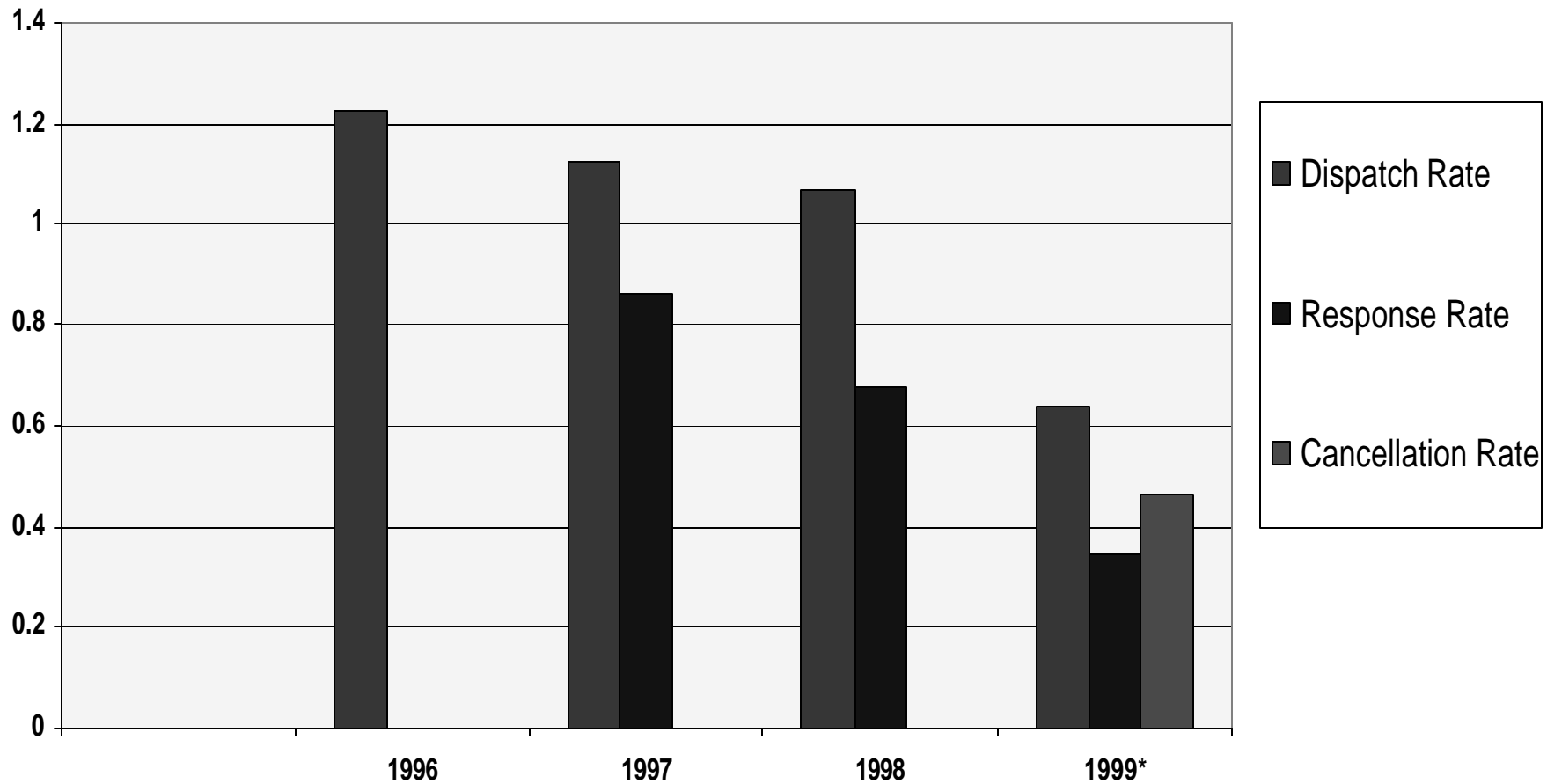
# Recognition

- In 1995 SIAC recognized the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office for having the lowest false alarm rate in the country.
- Since that time alarm companies working in conjunction with PBSO have reduced false dispatches by more than 30%.

# Permits Compared to Responses



# Dispatch Rate as Percentage





So now let's look at the specifics of the local alarm ordinance and what requirements must be followed in your town:

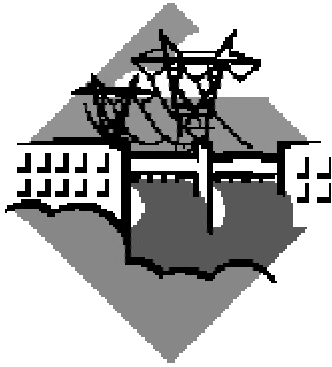
# Reasons for False Dispatches

- 80-95% of all false alarms are caused by the system user.
- 5% due to equipment malfunction
- And the remaining 5% from:
  - Weather
  - System Maintenance
  - And undetermined causes

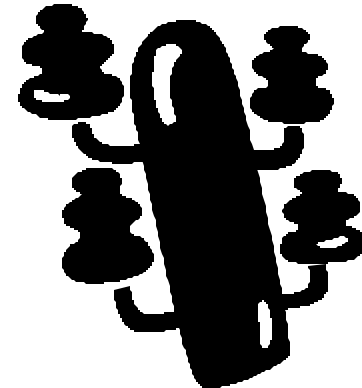
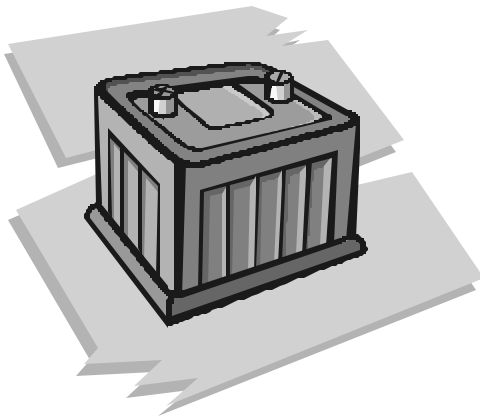
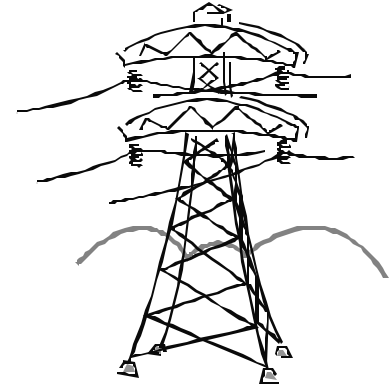
# So now -- how can you help?

- By following some very simple procedures, you can reduce false alarms responses to your home and business:

# Power



- Batteries
- Transformers
- Power Supplies
  - AC Outlets



# Proper Emergency Information

- Make Sure your central station has:
  - An up to date password list (and make sure everyone who will use the alarm knows their password)
  - Proper phone numbers to enable a verification call to your home or business
  - List of emergency people to notify should the alarm activate

# Around your home/business

- Keep pets out of areas secured by motion detection devices
- Increase your entry/exit delay times (your alarm company can provide assistance with this feature)
- If new employees are hired, train them on the use of the alarm system—don't assume they know how it works.

# Your Security or Fire System

- Update antiquated equipment
- Get additional training if needed from the security company
- Keep your system properly maintained (this is different from updating a system)
  - Replace batteries
  - Have the system checked at least once per year by a licensed alarm contractor

# Annunciators



- Exterior Sirens
- Interior Sirens
  - Bells
- Strobe Lights





# Installation – Service -- Maintenance

Only permit a licensed alarm contractor to perform any alarm installations, service or maintenance.

An unlicensed contractor may save you a few dollars now, but it will cost you in the long term

*If you are unsure about a contractor or an individual you are using or are considering using you can contact either any of the following agencies for more information:*

Alarm Association of Florida  
800-899-2099

Department of Business and Professional  
Regulation-Electrical Contractors  
Licensing Board  
850-487-1395