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# An Executive Overview of Enhanced Call Verification

***Presented By:***

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*"One Voice for the Alarm Industry on Alarm Management Issues"*





# ECV Implementation Guide

With the implementation of **Enhanced Call Verification** becoming more prevalent, the Security Industry Alarm Coalition (SIAC) is providing general guidelines and recommendations for implementing this proven dispatch reduction program.

## **LEGAL AND CONTRACT CONSIDERATIONS**

This document is not intended to be a substitution for consulting with legal counsel as to the best method of adopting ECV and ensuring compliance with your contract with your customer. You should consult with your legal counsel to determine if adopting ECV as a policy impacts your current contract.

- Some companies have contracts that allow them to send an announcement to their customer announcing that ECV will commence on a certain date, and the customer has a deadline to refuse ECV. If they do not hear back from the client, ECV is implemented automatically on the effective date.
- Some companies have contracts that required each customer to sign a new monitoring contract.

If ECV is being required as part of legislation, such as an alarm ordinance, your contract cannot exempt you from compliance. You should still use a path of implementation that has been reviewed by your legal counsel.

When ECV is being implemented as part of a regional effort, such as new legislation or a proactive association program, companies may consider using either the local association attorney or the counsel from a third party monitoring facility to review the process for everyone.

## **STAGED IMPLEMENTATION**

The objective is to have all of your customers operating under Enhanced Call Verification. The first step is to make sure all new installations begin with ECV as part of their dispatch protocol.

In many cases, the majority of the invalid dispatches are caused by less than 10 percent of your customer base and you should consider staged implementation to concentrate on these customers first. You can identify those customers who have the highest number of invalid alarms and bring them under the ECV protocol.

The final stage is completing ECV protocols for all of your customers.

## **ECV EFFECTIVENESS**

ECV will be most effective when the central station call out list contains a second premise number or cellular phone as the second number, since these are the numbers that will not be affected by call waiting.

## **SUMMARY**

Enhanced Call Verification is proven to have a dramatic and significant impact on reducing dispatches to invalid alarms. In addition, your customers will appreciate the higher level of service which results in eliminating invalid police dispatches. No matter what process is used to implement ECV, it is a matter of the highest importance to the alarm industry and the alarm users that we move toward industry wide acceptance. No matter what the implications of processing your existing customers, there is no obstacle to applying all of the best solutions to your new customers.

## **ANSI APPROVED**

As of 2005 ECV is an approved ANSI Standard and as such would be an appropriate defense against alleged related liability .

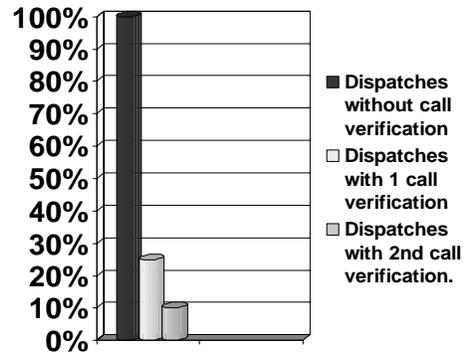
# THE CASE FOR ECV

In 2001 law enforcement challenged the alarm industry to develop a reduction plan that wouldn't require a great deal of effort or administration on their part. The Security Industry Alarm Coalition studied the problem and understanding that 75%-80% of all alarms are caused by user error, determined that in addition to improving user training an effort to contact the user immediately after an alarm would reduce dispatches and improve the opportunity to solve customer error issues.

## THE THEORY

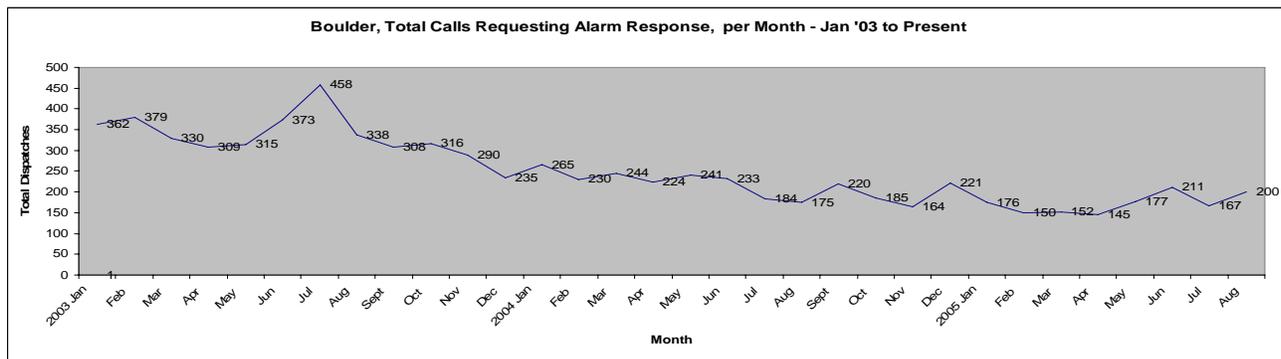
In the last two decades the industry has universally employed the use of a single call to the premises to reduce dispatches to burglary signals. This single call resulted in reductions of 75%, leaving 25% as dispatched calls.

By employing a second call another 15% of the total calls received should result in no dispatch. If successful, this would represent an **ADDITIONAL 60% reduction** in dispatch requests to police.



## THE TEST

A true test was needed to see if the theory would prove out with city-wide industry participation. Boulder, Colorado agreed to be a test site for the process. Boulder had just taken their alarm ordinance off the books so any reductions could be directly attributed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> call.



**THE RESULTS 35%-50% in Dispatch Reductions!** Most National Companies, as well as many regional and local installing dealers have begun applying ECV across their customer bases. The results have been consistent, when immediately contacted, customers quickly recognize an error or situation exists that does not warrant a premise response and verbally confirm that no dispatch is required.

**ECV Implementation REDUCES central station costs!** - Nearly all companies report a large reduction in out-going call activity. Pre-ECV Procedure: after the call to the premises (call #1) the operator would call for dispatch (call #2), and then call people on the RP list (call #3, #4 or more). New ECV protocol: Call premises (call #1), call customer cell (call #2), customer confirms invalid alarm **no further calling is required** – otherwise dispatch request is made and RP list contacted.



# CONSUMER GUIDE TO ECV

Dear Alarm Customer:

Within the burglar alarm industry there is a movement to migrate alarm customers to a process that is called Enhanced Call Verification or ECV. You are likely to be contacted by your alarm company in the near future or you may after reading this document elect to contact your alarm company to initiate this process.

**THE PROBLEM:** Over the last twenty years there has been a large increase in the number of properties, both residential and non residential, that have deployed burglar alarm systems to protect lives and property. Along with this increase in the alarm population there has been a proportionate increase in the number of occasions that the alarm industry is requesting a dispatch by law enforcement to what turn out to be false alarms. Studies have shown that the vast majority of these are caused by user error.

**THE HISTORY:** Over a decade ago the industry deployed a process of verification by which the alarm company calls the premises and asks for a pass code prior to requesting a dispatch from law enforcement. This procedure has been effective in eliminating over 75% of the false dispatches. However, with the huge increase in the sheer number of new systems the remaining 25% of these dispatches still represent far too large a drain on law enforcement resources and must be dealt with.

**ECV:** At the request of law enforcement the industry began a series of tests with the verification process. These tests involved calling additional contact numbers prior to the dispatch request. This produced reductions in dispatch requests of between 30 and 50%. ECV has the potential of delivering reductions in dispatches sufficient to bring immediate relief to law enforcement while the industry delivers other solutions that are far more cumbersome to enact and it is urgent that it be initiated as soon as possible.

**THE PROCESS:** *Enhanced Call Verification procedures are used **only for burglary signals**. Panic, holdup and other user initiated alarms will still be handled as per the procedure that you currently have in place with your alarm company.*

When your company deploys ECV they will be calling two phone numbers to verify prior to dispatching. On the average this will delay the dispatch by less than 30 seconds. When available, the second number called should be a cellular number since most of the false dispatches occur while turning the system either on or off. It is not the intention of this procedure to have you guess as to whether to dispatch the police when you are not at the premises. Since these alarms are occurring during the on/ off process it makes sense that someone is either at the premises or has recently left. In this case you will have sufficient information to make a decision on when to request a dispatch of law enforcement.

**If you are not at the premises, or have not recently left, or do not have additional information such as it's the maid's day to work, then the decision should always be for the alarm company to dispatch a responder.**

**GOOD CITIZENSHIP:** Implementing ECV serves the community by conserving resources but is no substitute for responsible operation of your alarm system. If there is a need for more training you should contact your alarm company and request additional instruction. If there is an ongoing problem with the equipment that is causing dispatches to invalid alarms, then the system should be serviced to eliminate the problem. Most problems can be minimized by insuring that you've been given adequate time to arm the alarm and safely exit, or enter and turn the alarm off. The industry standards recommend that you have at least 60 seconds to exit and 45 seconds to enter. You can verify your systems programming by contacting your alarm company.

So we are asking for your help, work with your alarm company and your local police to bring this problem under control.