

MODEL STATES REPORT

*A Cooperative Effort by IACP-PSLC/SACOP
And the Alarm Industry*

Executive Summary

Few joint projects have yielded such valuable information as the "Model States False Dispatch Reduction Program". To just say this project was successful falls short of what was really accomplished. Success can be measured in many ways, yes we reduced the "raw" number of false dispatches in most cities, and we learned what works best and what works quickly. But the most exciting accomplishment of this program had to be the fact that **the public and private sector can work together to effectively reduce dispatches to the benefit of all.**

We found roughly 20% of the users caused 80% of the dispatches. By focusing on those accounts and contacting the responsible Alarm Company for corrective action, you can reduce dispatches significantly in less than a year. Of the 55 cities that participated, 28 yielded sufficient data for this report, 21 of those reduced dispatches, some as high as 62%. Six of the seven agencies with increases were from California, where the program had not yet reached maturity due to their late entry. Most agencies did very well – primarily due to the Chief or Sheriff making it clear to all, that this project was important and a high priority for the department.

Despite our best effort to control the variables going into this project, we found unique issues and differences from state to state and city to city that delayed or impaired many of the jurisdictions in their attempt to pass ordinances, collect data, or generally implement the program:

- *Local politics/elections*
- *Budget constraints*
- *Allocation manpower/resources*
- *Personnel Changes*
- *Incompatible, or non-existent computer systems and software for tracking dispatches and permits/fines*
- *City attorneys – ordinance reviews*
- *Accounting/finance department concerns outside of the Chief's/Sheriff's domain.*
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Best Practices - In order to establish an effective false dispatch reduction program there are best practices that should be considered. Experience has shown us that these practices should be looked at as building blocks, not as an all or none package. The practices listed below were found to be effective regardless of the jurisdiction size.

- *Agency accepting cancellations*
- *Strict enforcement of alarm ordinance*

- *Requiring registration/alarm permits*
- *Fines – escalating & meaningful*
- *Restricting response to chronic abusers*
- *Requiring attempted verification by dealer*
- *Notification to user of all dispatches*
- *Alarm user training classes*

Essential Elements:

- *Alarm dealer/Law enforcement communication & cooperation*
- *Committing adequate alarm unit staffing*
- *Alarm dispatch tracking software to measure & manage process*
- *Effective ordinance that incorporates "best practices" listed above*
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We recommend passing ordinances with best practices and elements specified above for the purpose of mandating corrective action by the end user through their alarm service provider. The NBFAA-FARA Model Ordinance included in this report is an excellent template that most agencies in this project utilized.

We saw remarkable compliance by alarm dealers in Washington State with corresponding dispatch reductions before ordinances were changed! We are encouraged by the actions of this group of dealers. By addressing issues with their worst customers promptly, nine of their cities were in the top ten with highest reductions! The cooperation between Law Enforcement and the Alarm Industry in Washington was unsurpassed!

Cities with previous dispatch reduction experience may not yield as high of reductions in subsequent efforts. Once the "worst offenders" have been corrected the next level of reductions will be more of a challenge, particularly when you get down to one or two dispatches per location per year. Two of the cities that supported this project: Elgin, IL and Bellevue, WA were previously in the Model Cities effort.

In Conclusion - We believe that reducing false dispatches is and will be an ongoing effort. There can be no let-up in ordinance enforcement and dealer corrective action or certainly the trend will reverse back to yearly increases. The alarm dealer must take a proactive approach in targeting their worst customers. Law enforcement must be a part of the process. Continued end-user training and education by all parties is essential. Installing new equipment meeting the new ANSI approved SIA Control Panel Standard and retrofitting older systems should be considered in future ordinance changes.

It is our sincere hope that you will find the following information useful. The opinions and observations were based on evaluation of the project data for the 28 cities that furnished the required information, combined with the experience of all four coordinators and the national coordinator. This report was reviewed prior to its release by the IACP – Private Sector Liaison Committee.

For a copy of the entire report contact Stan Martin at stan@siacinc.org or go to <http://www.siacinc.org/>