

City of Olympia Security Alarm Program

City of
OLYMPIA

History

In 2003, The City of Olympia Police Department began examining its calls-for-service workload to determine whether calls could be handled more efficiently. The data indicated that the department was responding to a large number of false alarms - calls that did not increase public safety and that detracted from valuable police service in other areas. The Department asked the alarm industry and interested citizens to partner with the police to develop new ordinances aimed at reducing false alarms. After working for a year and a half, two ordinances were drafted and signed into law. The new ordinances went into effect on January 1, 2005 and the program was fully operational in June 2005.

Olympia Security Alarm Ordinances

The ordinances, OMC 5.55 and 16.46, address both the alarm industry and alarm users. Key to the new ordinances is the relationship between security alarm businesses and their customers. The companies and their customers must work together to ensure that proper call verification procedures are followed, that equipment is in good working order, and that customers are trained to use their equipment correctly.

Successful Results

The City of Olympia has reduced false alarms by over 89.5% from its initial 2003 levels (see graph below). In addition, since 2008 the City collected an average of 95.1% of the alarm-related fees. The police officers enjoy responding less often to these non-events and the public has responded favorably. By contracting with a third party vendor for the tracking and billing of false alarms, the City was able to implement the program quickly while providing alarm

Key Points to Reduce False Alarms

OMC 5.55:

- Enhanced call verification (2-call)
- Installation of modern equipment (ANSI SIA CP-01)
- Consumer education

OMC 16.46

- No "freebies" – all false alarms are charged
- Registration suspension after four alarms

response and great service to our citizens. These accomplishments have allowed the Olympia Police Department to be both more effective and efficient.

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