

2006 POLICE ALARM INDUSTRY SURVEY

# BUILDING A POWERFUL PARTNERSHIP

Exclusive New Study Shows 96% of Police Value the Alarm Industry



**SecuritySales**  
& INTEGRATION

**POLICE**  
THE LAW ENFORCEMENT MAGAZINE

Made Possible by a Grant From

**Honeywell**

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT FROM BOBIT BUSINESS MEDIA

# Honeywell

Dear Reader,

At Honeywell, we're proud to have enjoyed a long-standing and productive partnership with the law enforcement community. After all, the mission of the security industry closely parallels the goals and objectives of law enforcement — protecting lives and property and safeguarding communities from crime.

As an industry, we work tirelessly to reduce false alarms through education and training, and by incorporating advanced Security Industry Association (SIA) false alarm reduction features into our equipment. I can personally assure you that Honeywell remains committed to continually improving performance and delivering increasingly sophisticated and easy-to-use security products. Within the past few years, we've introduced solutions such as graphic touchscreen displays, a new generation of glassbreak detectors and other products designed and engineered to help minimize false alarms.

We truly appreciate the tireless efforts of the police, whose dedication and daily sacrifice help keep us safe. Now, as an industry, we must continue to work together vigilantly to strengthen the partnership we share with the law enforcement community. In strength, after all, is security.

Sincerely,



**Ron Rothman**  
**President**  
**Honeywell Security & Custom Electronics**



# publisher's perspective

## Police and the Alarm Industry Are a Formidable Crime-Fighting Team

**D**allas Becomes Largest City With Verified Response.

Colorado County Considers Enhanced Call Verification. L.A. Council Unanimously Approves New Alarm Ordinance. City Considers Jail Time for False Alarm Offenders. Washington County Fines Alarm Companies Instead of Users.

These headlines pulled from the pages of *Security Sales & Integration* — the leading magazine serving the electronic security industry — indicate just how intensified the already heated false alarm issue has become. Although false alarms are as old as alarm systems themselves, several factors have recently caused more municipalities to either stop responding to burglar alarms altogether or at least seriously reconsider how they are handled.

Despite the fact that alarm equipment has become much more reliable during the past 30 years, the exponential proliferation of installed systems has raised industry's vulnerability to its principle shortcoming — user error. According to J.P. Freeman and Co., a Newtown, Conn.-based research firm, user error accounts for upwards of 60 percent of all false alarms.

On the other side of the equation, increased workloads, personnel shortages and budget cutbacks have made it very difficult for law enforcement to keep up with the rising number of alarm-related calls. Some police departments have addressed this quandary by instituting alarm ordinances that feature training programs and escalating fine schedules for alarm owners. Others have been looking for a more extreme alternative.

According to SSI's 2005 Installation Business Report, of the several hundred alarm installers who were polled, 55 percent say verified response — the requirement for alarm signals to be confirmed via person, video and/or audio prior to police dispatch — has been adopted or is being investigated in the cities they serve. Increasingly, verified response is becoming an attractive option for agencies seeking to stop patrol cars from being sent to locations where an alarm has been falsely triggered.



**Michael Zawinski**  
Publisher, *Security Sales & Integration*  
mike.zawinski@bobit.com



**Leslie Maris**  
Publisher, *Police Magazine*  
leslie.maris@bobit.com

In most cases, though, such as the highly publicized rifts in Los Angeles and, more recently, Dallas, verified response is a desperate alternative in situations where police and alarm companies have been unable to effectively communicate and compromise with one another. Unfortunately, like children whose parents get divorced, it's usually the citizens who are ultimately victimized by this divide.

In theory, the police and alarm communities share a common mission of protecting and serving the public. However, lately, that noble purpose has appeared on its way to becoming a casualty of circumstance.

What can be done to turn the tide? How much damage has been done? How widespread is the anti-alarm sentiment? Is it too late to mend the fences? What do police really think about the alarm industry and the false alarm problem? Is it still possible for both sides to partner and forge mutually amenable solutions?

Since tomorrow's progress can only take place if one knows where they are today, SSI in conjunction with Bobit Business Media Research Services recently initiated a nationwide study and conducted numerous police interviews to answer these and other crucial questions. This research is a follow-up to the magazine's landmark "2003 Police Alarm Industry Study," which was the first of its kind ever produced.

In a show of solidarity and a demonstration of the great things the alarm industry and law enforcement can accomplish together, SSI has once again partnered with its sister publication *Police* magazine to bring the equally groundbreaking "2006 Police Alarm Industry Survey" to fruition.

The findings that follow will stun those who have been bombarded by the overwhelming amount of venom depicted in the media by police toward alarm systems. It turns out that, by and large, law enforcement remains an advocate of alarm systems and receptive to partnering with the alarm industry to forge the best possible solutions.

The bottom line is, our professions can effectively improve the false alarm problem...if we work together. ■

**SPECIAL REPORT**

# LAW ENFORCEMENT

# Endorses

# Alarm Industry



**By Scott Goldfine**  
 Editor-in-Chief  
 Security Sales & Integration  
 scott.goldfine@securitysales.com

**AT A GLANCE**

- Security Sales & Integration and Police magazines, and Bobit Business Media Research Services produce follow-up to 2003's "Police Alarm Industry Study"
- Purpose of the survey is to determine law enforcement's perception of and attitudes toward burglar alarms, the companies that install them and the industry itself
- Survey sent electronically to 10,558 Police subscribers, with 1,263 usable responses generated for a 10-percent return rate and a 3.6-percent margin of error
- Findings prove most police officers see value in alarm systems and remain interested in partnering with the alarm industry to fight crime

Security Sales & Integration and Police magazines follow up their study of law enforcement attitudes toward burglar alarms and find the security industry continues to be viewed as a valued partner. Steep declines in false alarm problems and verified response initiatives, along with growing interest in technologies like CCTV, indicate the ties between police and alarm companies may be gaining strength.

**L**ike Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, the burglar alarm industry and law enforcement have engaged in a decades-long relationship marked by great success and camaraderie, as well as communication breakdowns and contention. When working as true partners, both have contributed enormously to the benefit and well being of all — the Rolling Stones in the form of life-affirming music, and the alarm industry and police via life-enhancing systems and response.

Together, the alarm industry and the law enforcement community represent the top two players on America's crime-fighting team. While they both strive toward the

common goal of safeguarding people and property, it is important to recognize their organizational differences. Most significantly, one consists of commercial enterprises that must always be conscious of making money; the other is comprised of municipal agencies whose primary concern is how much money is being spent.

Those two factors have been driving forces in the most divisive and controversial issue ever to arise between the alarm industry and police: false alarms. While most people *expect* and accept some false alarms, believing the crime deterrence *value* outweighs the nuisance potential, sometimes the balance shifts the other way.

There have been tremendous technological strides made in the design and manufacture of false alarm-resistant equipment, but the ever-rising market penetration of monitored systems combined with law enforcement's limited resources (and shifted responsibilities post-9/11) have led to some tense conflicts. Most are amicably resolved, but these situations boil over on occasion and result in limited or no police response.

Ultimately, both alarm companies and police exist to serve the citizenry — the former focusing on end users who pay for system monitoring and the latter on the general public. While the alarm industry argues that their customers are taxpaying citizens who are entitled to police response, law

enforcement retorts that their duty is to serve the good of the many. Since those with systems are in the minority, false alarms are a hindrance. A further complication is that all the research points to user error as the leading cause of false alarms.

It's for certain that solving the false alarm problem is one tall order. However, there is a very logical place to start. In every situation in which alarm companies and police have become antagonistic, there was a relationship issue; either there was none to begin with, it was flawed or it had been damaged in some way. And what are relationships based on? *Communication*.

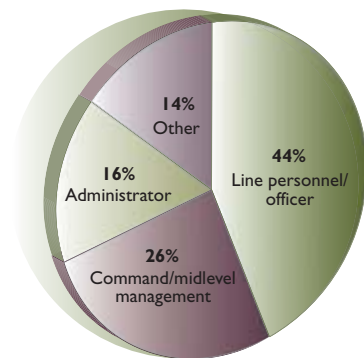
Achieving effective communication is reliant upon the establishment of an environment based on mutual respect and trust that is conducive to the open exchange of thoughts, ideas and feelings. Does such an environment exist between alarm companies and police? If not, how can more communicative relationships be nurtured and built? After all the false

alarm issues, how does law enforcement really view burglar alarm systems and the industry itself?

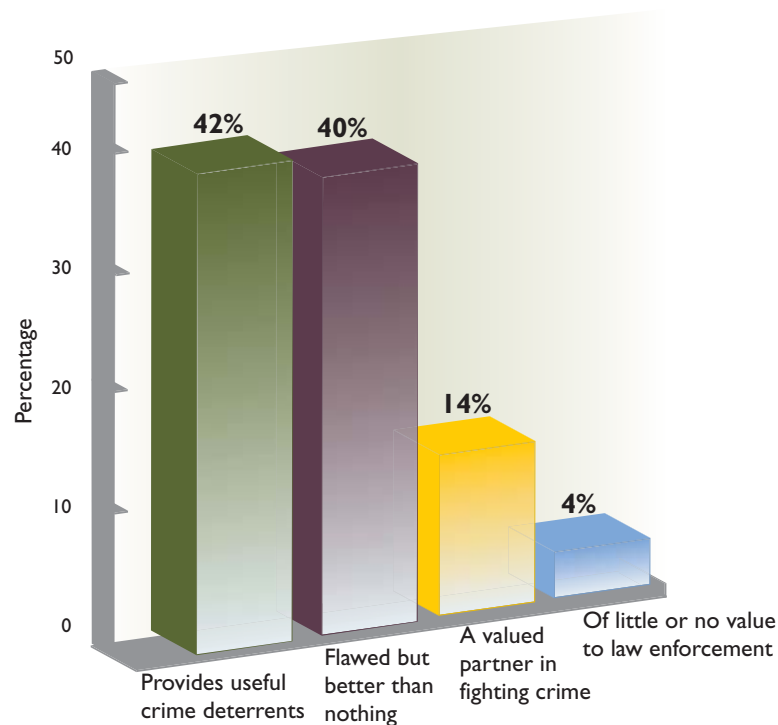
To answer these and other critical questions, *Security Sales & Integration*, its sister publication, *Police*, and Bobit Business Media Research Services have once again teamed up to revisit their landmark 2003 "Police Alarm Industry Survey." The findings of the 2006 study, in which 1,263 law enforcement professionals participated (compared to 334 in 2003), are no less compelling than they were three years ago, plus the data now lends itself to fascinating comparisons.

The ensuing statistics, along with comments from nearly 25 police officers of varied rank and jurisdiction, define law enforcement's perception of burglar alarm systems. The data also sheds light on how they view the companies that install those systems and the industry as a whole; the impact of burglar alarm dispatch calls and how they affect their job performance; and possible solutions for easing the false

### Demographics of Survey Respondents



### What Is Your General Perception of the Electronic Security/Burglar Alarm Industry?



## 2006 POLICE ALARM INDUSTRY SURVEY



**"I believe that a monitored burglar alarm provides crucial notice to help prevent loss of property or life by allowing professional law enforcement the chance to react and respond,"**

**says Jeff Calhoun of the Wisconsin Capitol Police Department, "Without the monitoring, it is just a sound in the night."**

alarm problem and fostering better collaboration with the alarm industry.

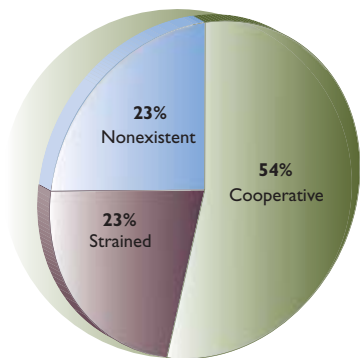
### 96% of Police Perceive the Alarm Industry as Offering Value

When asked their overall perception of the electronic security/burglar alarm industry, the most popular choice among respondents (42 percent) was that it provides useful crime deterrents. This was a 3-percent decline from the 2003 study, but nonetheless very positive.

**"The research is clear. Alarmed homes and businesses are less likely to be victimized than their unprotected counterparts. Security alarms and false alarms are not synonymous,"** says Cmdr. Tom Chronister of the Oxnard (Calif.) Police Department.

**Bryan Proctor of the Cleburne (Texas) Police Department adds, "I am not surprised that most law enforcement officials believe that electronic security is a value to law enforcement."**

### In Your City, How Do You View the Relationship Between Law Enforcement and the Alarm Companies?



**Point of fact, it is a value. Even though most alarm calls are false alarms, there is that small number that are true alarms. Those true alarms are crimes in progress that would otherwise go unreported until the crime was completed or never reported."**

Four of 10 respondents said alarms are flawed, but better than nothing. This was a 4-percent increase from 2003. Several respondents pointed out the detriment of false alarm dispatches in locations where officers are responsible for covering a lot of geographic territory.

**"The issue of false alarms is more significant in many respects for rural police agencies,"** says retired Station Commander Duane Corbo of the New York State Police. **"Alarm companies need to understand significant resources — sometimes the only patrol for half a county — becomes unavailable to answer an alarm. Travel distances to false alarms can sometimes be 15 to 20 miles."**

Another common gripe was that officers often show up at premises where

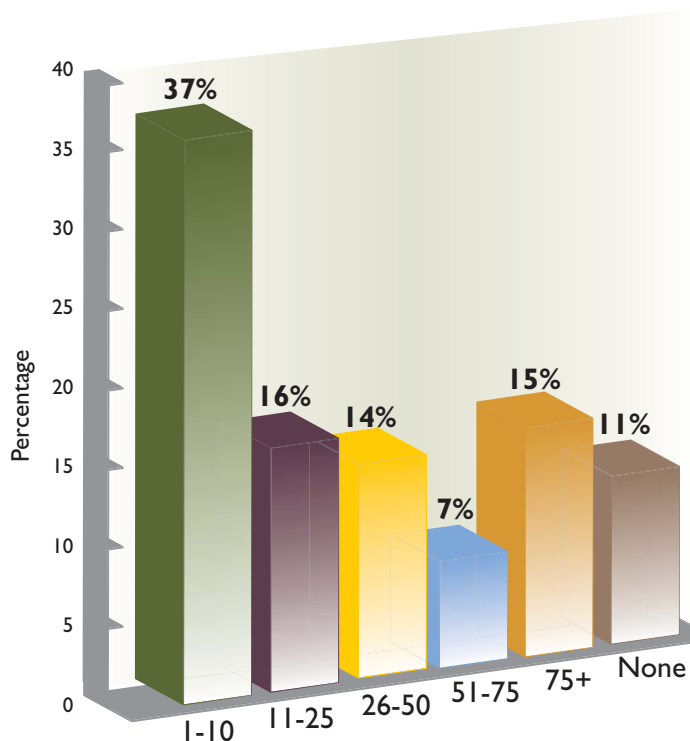
an alarm call has originated in which a door or window is open and no one can track down the responsible party.

**"Alarm companies need to ensure there is a contact number available so there is a response [from the system owner],"** says Croydon (N.H.) Police Department Chief Richard Lee. **"Nothing is more irritating than finding a door or window open and being told no one will be responding to secure it."**

Some are critical of the time it takes for a monitoring facility to notify police of an alarm event. This is ironic since in some cases, the central station may be taking longer because it is seeking to verify an alarm before summoning police.

**"Alarm companies need to decrease the delay time on robbery and burglary calls,"** says Capt. Kevin Morlan of the Jefferson (Ind.) Police Department. **"We have tested some businesses for armed-robbery calls, and found it sometimes takes three to five minutes before police are notified. A lot of bad things can happen during that time."**

### On Average, How Many Residential False Alarms Does Your Department Respond to in a Typical Week?



Just about the exact same percentage (14) of law enforcement officials said that the alarm industry was a valued partner in fighting crime as they did three years ago.

**"I believe more officers realize alarm systems not only alert law enforcement of crimes, but deter crimes,"** says Jay Sherman with the Support Services Division of the Germantown (Wis.) Police Department. **"The problems usually develop from isolated instances of bad alarm companies or poorly trained system operators. Law enforcement agencies are political and these isolated instances get used as fodder in an agenda."**

If the "2006 Police Alarm Industry Survey" is any indication, these so-called isolated incidents may be on the decline. Just 4 percent of respondents said the alarm industry was of little or no value to law enforcement. That marks a 33-percent drop compared to 2003 (6 percent).

"The alarm companies are primarily interested in selling their products. That's all well and good, but there is a

misperception on their part as well as the general public," says Sheriff Wayne Rausch of the Latah County (Idaho) Sheriff's Office. "The role of law enforcement is to serve and protect the public interest, not the individual."

#### More Than Half Report Cooperative Relationships With Alarm Firms

As mentioned at the outset, any hostility between law enforcement and the alarm industry can usually be traced to nonexistent or damaged relationships. When asked how they view the relationship between law enforcement and the alarm industry, the majority of respondents (54 percent) said it is cooperative. However, that percentage is down from 60 percent three years ago.

**"Communicate,"** urges Capt. Gary Hoelzer of the Town and Country (Mo.) Police Department. **"Fifteen years ago, we began meeting with alarm company representatives about our growing false alarm problem. In those intervening 15 years, our false**



**"Alarm companies need to educate their customers as to the reasons why police have to manage false alarms and why the alarm industry and users must support those approaches,"**

says Glastonbury (Conn.) Police Chief Thomas Sweeney.

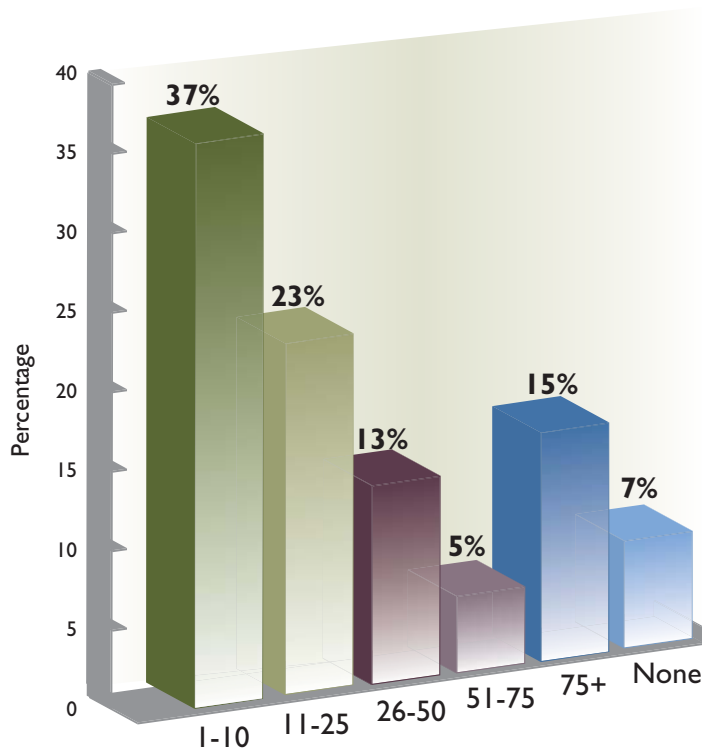
**alarms have been reduced from a high of 2,400 to 1,500 annually."**

**"Relationships are two-way streets; alarm companies need to reach out to law enforcement agencies in their service areas and law enforcement agencies need to reach out to the alarm companies,"** recommends Paradise Valley (Ariz.) Police Chief John Wintersteen. **"When they have lunch together, exchange phone numbers, meet face to face and maybe even play golf together. Then when there is a problem. The relationship usually takes care of itself."**

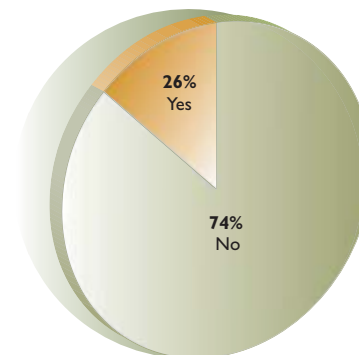
Nearly one in four respondents (23 percent) indicated that the relationship between law enforcement and the alarm industry is strained, which compares to 17 percent in the prior study.

"One thing I have noticed," says Jeff Calhoun of the Wisconsin Capitol Police Department, "is that alarm companies don't always respond in a timely fashion to questions from the officers on the streets. To improve the relationships, perhaps alarm companies could send

### On Average, How Many Commercial False Alarms Does Your Department Respond to in a Typical Week?



### Do You Personally Have an Electronic Burglar Alarm System in Your Home?



## 2006 POLICE ALARM INDUSTRY SURVEY



**"I have found that approximately 80 percent of the time, the alarm company cannot produce an owner call-back number so we could speak with them," asserts Bryan Proctor of the Cleburne (Texas) Police Department. "Most of the time, we have to leave the property as we found it because no one could get a hold of a key holder."**

representatives to police departments to answer the officers' questions."

The same percentage (23 percent) called the relationship with alarm companies nonexistent. That figure remained unchanged from the 2003 study.

Frank Plunkett of the Mount Laurel Township (N.J.) Police Department says, "The installers come in and install the product and leave," he says. "The police never see or hear from them. The monitoring agencies only contact the police when they are reporting an activation. It would be beneficial if alarm companies required regional sales representatives to work with local police departments as partners and not just try to gain referrals."

### In Excess of 50% Contend With 11 or More False Alarm Calls Per Week

According to police, residential and commercial properties are about equal in the frequency of false alarm calls. When asked the average number of false alarms their departments respond to in a typical week, the percentages were nearly identical, with the most common response (37 percent) falling into the 1-10 range. In both cases, 15 percent also said their agencies handle more than 75 false alarms per week.

"I am not surprised the mix of false alarm calls is close to even as it should mirror to some extent the proportion of monitored residences and businesses," says Paradise Valley's Wintersteen. "Each represents a different problem: family training, and often other issues as well, in residences; employee training in businesses."

Response to commercial false alarms did come out slightly higher overall in the study as 93 percent said their departments deal with at least

some on a weekly basis, compared to 89 percent for residential. No correlation could be made with the 2003 research as the question in that study pertained to the individual officer rather than their department.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of this question is that the majority of police officers in both residential (52 percent) and commercial (56 percent) report their departments must contend with 11 or more false alarms each week.

### Nearly 9 in 10 Cops Who Own Alarm Systems Use Them

In the U.S. market, residential alarm system penetration is believed to be 20 percent to 30 percent of all homes. When asked if they personally own a home security system, police placed themselves squarely in that range as 26 percent (vs. 32 percent in 2003) responded affirmatively. This seems to indicate law enforcement places at least as much value on alarm systems as the general public.

"As police officers know, even a sign in your window can be a deterrent. If it even deters one bad guy, you have won a battle," says retired Sgt. Jim Harris of the Houston Police Department. "If the sign does not scare the bad guy away, maybe the loud noise of an alarm system will."

More impressive than the percentage of law enforcement officers who own home security systems is how many said they use them regularly (87 percent). This figure dwarfs that of the previous study (49 percent) and is

presumed to be significantly higher than the general population.

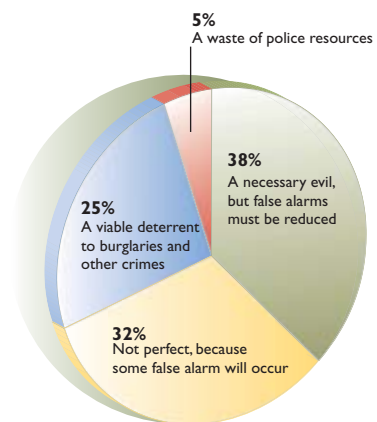
**"Most officers realize that when used properly, an alarm system provides an additional layer of safety to their personal home and family," adds Wisconsin's Calhoun. "It gives them a chance to prevent someone from entering their home or to notify on-duty law enforcement to respond. A false alarm is no more embarrassing to a police officer than it is to a regular person. It's just that they will be given grief from co-workers if it happens on a regular basis!"**

Of the 13 percent of respondents who said they own but do not use their home security systems, the predominant reason was that monitoring services were not worth the money. The other answers were four-legged protection (28 percent), false alarms and/or equipment problems (20 percent) and lack of user-friendliness (12 percent). This order was the same three years ago, with the big difference being that only 33 percent believed monitoring was not worth the expense.

### 84% of Police Say Alarms Effective in Protecting People, Property

If the alarm industry is seeking to hang its collective hat on one piece of data out of the "2006 Police Alarm Industry Survey" to justify its public good, it just may be the fact that 84 percent of law enforcement believes monitored electronic burglar alarms

### Overall, I Believe Electronic Burglar Alarms Are ...



### Why Don't You Use Your Home Alarm System?

- Not worth the money** 40%
- Guard dog is sufficient** 28%
- False alarms/flawed equipment** 20%
- Difficult for family/others to operate** 12%

help prevent loss of property and/or life. Even if there are varying degrees of accord to that assertion, it is still quite impressive.

“When in doubt, look at the empirical research. Temple University economics professors Simon Hakim and Erwin Blackstone have done landmark research on the effectiveness of alarm systems,” explains Oxnard’s Chronister. “They wrote that when it comes to protecting homes and businesses, ‘Installing a burglar alarm appears to be the single most effective precaution one can take.’ The property taken varies greatly between alarmed and nonalarmed premises.”

Breaking down the responses to this question a little farther, half the respondents said locks, lighting and other measures are as important as alarm systems, while 10 percent believe alarms do not eliminate crime, but induce criminals to carry on their illicit activities elsewhere. Additionally, 4 percent do not recommend purchasing systems to people until they have been burglarized, which is perhaps the top motivator among the general population. Only 6 percent dismissed burglar alarms as a nuisance.

When asked to complete the sentence: Overall, I believe electronic

burglar alarms are \_\_\_\_\_, the leading conclusion (38 percent) was that they are a necessary evil, but false alarms must be reduced. The second most popular answer (32 percent) was that they are not perfect and I understand some false alarms will occur. These choices were also the top two in 2003, although their order was reversed.

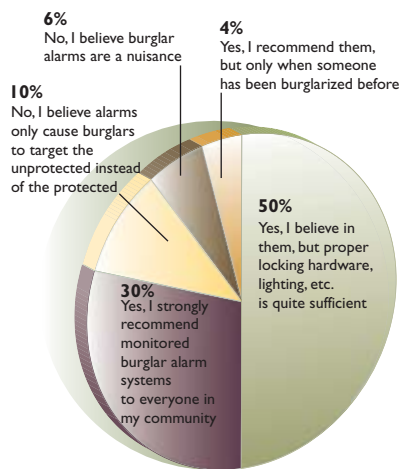
One of four respondents finished the statement by saying burglar alarms are a viable deterrent to burglaries and other crimes. Mount Laurel Township’s Plunkett offers, “The alarm industry is of great value to law enforcement as it does provide both a deterrent and reporting of crimes. The false alarm issue is secondary and seems to be more the fault of owners rather than the alarm companies.”

In certainly another positive sign for the alarm industry, only 5 percent of police believe alarms are a waste of police resources.

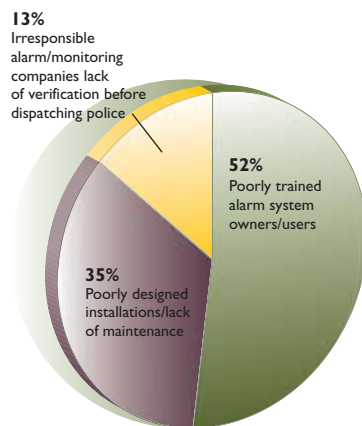
### System Operators Continue to Shoulder the Burden of Blame

As was the case when this study was originally conducted three years ago, poorly trained alarm system owners/users were the overwhelming choice when police were asked to identify the primary culprit for false alarms. In both surveys, more than half of the respondents (52 percent in 2006; 66 percent in 2003) placed the blame with end users.

### Do You Believe That Monitored Electronic Burglar Alarms Help Prevent Loss of Property and/or Life?



### Who/What Do You Believe Is Primarily to Blame for False Alarms?



“I have to admit that I love the idea that a CCTV system could be installed in an alarmed premise to do a visual upon an alarm activation,” says Saco (Maine) Police Chief Bradley Paul. “As technology changes, so too should the alarm monitoring industry.”

“Systems are only as good as the person who uses them and the level of training and understanding they have,” says Mike Sullenger, training sergeant for the Willacy County (Texas) Sheriff’s Department. “That is why it is vital to work with customers to ensure their knowledge of the system they have makes false alarms a rarity.”

Although end-user error is still the leading cited source of false alarms among both law enforcement and the alarm industry, the new data shows a greater percentage of police have begun laying blame at the doorstep of the alarm companies themselves. Thirty-five percent of police said poorly designed installations and lack of maintenance was at fault, while 13 percent targeted irresponsible alarm monitoring firms for lack of verification prior to police dispatch.

In the previous police study three years ago, only 30 percent of respondents pointed their fingers at system design and installation, while a mere 4 percent cited alarm monitoring operators as being irresponsible.

“False alarms are a problem for the user, the installer and the maintenance technician,” says Oxnard’s Chronister. “Here is our mantra, ‘Properly installed, maintained and operated electronic security systems do not generate false alarms!’”

### Interest in Verified Response More Than Halved Since 2003 Survey

One of the most popular techniques for law enforcement agencies to deal with false alarms has been by holding the alarm system owner accountable and issuing warnings and/or fines. That approach is also the one they have the most confidence in as it led the field of responses when police were asked what

## 2006 POLICE ALARM INDUSTRY SURVEY



**“Our local alarm company offered all police officers alarm systems at the lowest rate offered,” says Lt. Thomas Allman of the Mendocino County (Calif.) Sheriff’s Office. “It has allowed most of us to get alarm systems and gain a better understanding of how they operate and how they can malfunction.”**

was the best solution to the false alarm problem. That answer more than doubled from the prior study (17 percent).

This strategy, often officially referred to as a *model ordinance*, has resulted in varying degrees of success for public agencies around the country.

“My department has had a false alarm reduction unit in place for a long time,” states Officer David Cary of the Montgomery County (Md.) Police Department. “False alarms are dealt with by warnings and fines. All alarms must be registered or we will not respond. Even with all this though, we still respond to numerous false alarms.”

“Here in Oxnard, we have a very aggressive false alarm reduction program,” explains Chronister. “In just the past three years, alarm calls have declined 18 percent in spite of tremendous city growth. How? By holding users accountable. False alarm fines in Oxnard are not a moneymaking opportunity for us. It would be easier to

adopt verified response, but we do not want to do so in spite of 100 percent of alarm calls received between August 2005 and January 2006 being false.”

Speaking of verified response (in which a person or video or audio must verify the presence of an intruder prior to police dispatch), only 7 percent of respondents named that as the best solution, while just 5 percent recommended police not respond at all. Those figures compare with 17 percent and 3 percent respectively from the prior poll.

“My agency implemented a ‘four strikes and you’re out’ ordinance a few years ago in which after four false alarms, we will no longer respond to intrusion alarms,” says Sgt. Chuck Schauss of the Minnetonka (Minn.) Police Department. “We still respond to hold-up, fire and duress alarms, but charge accordingly. We did this in cooperation with an alarm industry association and have had great success with it.”

Many survey participants believe cooperation between law enforcement and the alarm industry is the principal path to solving the false alarm problem as 24 percent of them selected that as their answer. However, that represents a drop-off of 7 percentage points from the 2003 study in which it was easily the most popular response.

One of the highest profile solutions offered by the alarm industry the past

few years has been enhanced call verification (ECV) in which at least two phone calls are made to the alarm system’s responsible party before alerting police. However, this technique nose-dived from 21 percent three years ago to just 4 percent in the latest study.

Says Paradise Valley’s Wintersteen, “To a large degree, enhanced call verification is window dressing so that alarm monitoring companies can state they are doing something to reduce the number of false alarms. I agree with the vast majority of law enforcement professionals that ECV screens out only a tiny fraction of false alarms.”

### Most Agencies Are Actually Doing Little to Combat False Alarms

When asked which solutions have recently been implemented, more than half (56 percent) reported that nothing had been done and there were no plans to change anything in the near future. This is somewhat surprising considering the widespread and boisterous outcry about false alarms.

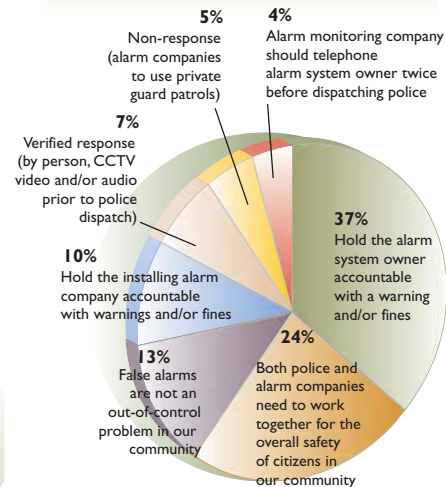
“Many members of the law enforcement community concede that false alarms are just a way of doing business,” adds Chronister. “Schlepping from one alarm call to the next has made them numb to the painful reality that alarm calls are a resource hog. Addressing a problem means finding a solution, and that takes time and effort.”

### Which of the Following Solutions Has Your Department Implemented Recently to Address False Alarms?

- Nothing new implemented recently – no major changes are in the works **56%**
- Hold the alarm system owner accountable with warning and/or fines **38%**
- Nothing new implemented recently – but major changes are in the works **6%**
- Verified response (by person, CCTV video and/or audio prior to police dispatch) **6%**
- Hold the installing alarm company accountable with warning and/or fines **4%**
- Non-response (alarm companies to use private guard patrols) **2%**

Note: Respondents could select more than one answer.

### What Do You Believe Is the Best Solution to the False Alarm Problem?



Even though only 6 percent of respondents said they had major changes in the works, there were success stories to be shared.

**“We implemented a new policy in 2005 that has reduced false alarms by 60 percent,”** says Laura Wohl, management analyst for the city of Olympia (Wash.). **“It has been successful largely because we worked cooperatively with the alarm industry in developing it. The alarm industry’s willingness to work with us on the problem of false alarms and to take an active role in decreasing them really cemented our relationship with the industry.”**

A combined 8 percent said they had recently implemented verified or non-response to alarms.

**Just 9% of Law Enforcement Believes Situation Cannot Be Fixed**

Another one of the most encouraging findings of the “2006 Police Alarm Industry Survey” is that when asked if they believe the false alarm problem can be overcome, less than one in 10 (9 per-

cent) said it could not. The overwhelming majority said the issue could be solved either through greater cooperation between law enforcement and the alarm industry or via more government regulations, laws and/or ordinances.

In that spirit of cooperation, Lt. Thomas Allman of the Mendocino County (Calif.) Sheriff’s Office says, “Our local alarm company offered all police officers alarm systems at the lowest rate. It has allowed most of us to get alarm systems and gain a better understanding of how they operate and how they can malfunction.”

Along similar lines, Lt. Daniel Hester of the Los Angeles County Police offers, “Alarm companies should hold training sessions to acquaint law enforcement with the different systems and how they operate. Perhaps alarm owners should visit community block meetings to discuss the products and their interaction with law enforcement.”

Another outcome of this question that bodes well for the future of the

burglar alarm industry is that one-fifth of all respondents said they do not have much of a false alarm problem in their community. That percentage is five times greater than it was in 2003 (4 percent).

**Majority See CCTV, Access Control as Enhancing Policing Efforts**

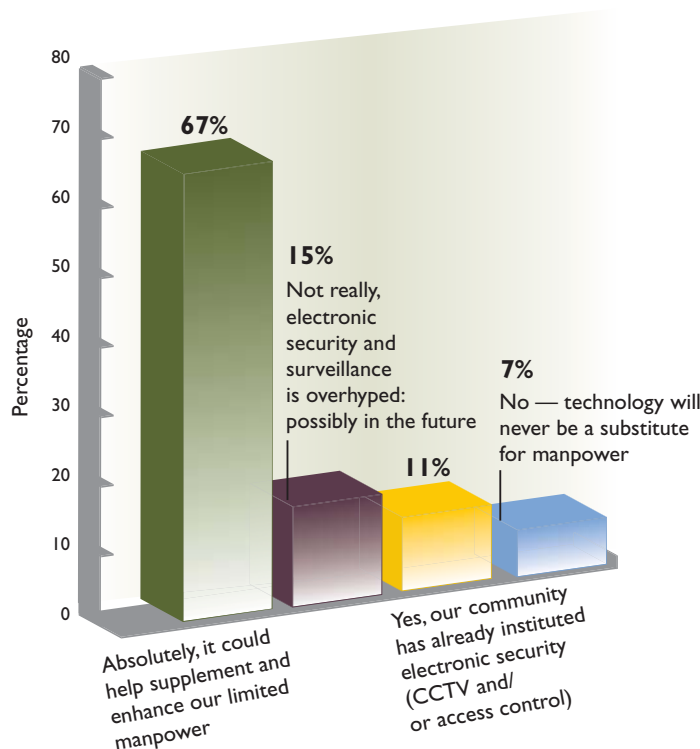
The alarm industry has a lot more to offer law enforcement and the citizens they serve than just burglar alarms. Increasingly, agencies from L.A. to Chicago and beyond are beginning to deploy other electronic security measures such as closed-circuit TV (CCTV) surveillance, access control and other more advanced technologies.

When asked if such systems could offer additional benefits to public safety in their community, a whopping 67 percent said absolutely, while another 11 percent said they had already instituted CCTV or access in their locale.

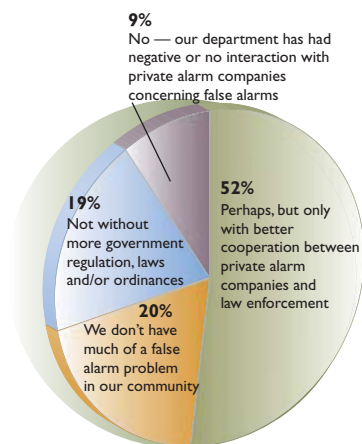
“I am a firm believer in CCTV use,” says Deputy John Coyle of the Santa Barbara County (Calif.) Sheriff’s Department. “Our department has had great success with solving and prosecuting burglary cases when we have video to assist us.” ■

*The opinions and comments expressed by the police officers in this article are solely those of the individuals and do not necessarily represent those of their respective agencies.*

**Do You Believe Electronic CCTV Video Surveillance and Access Control Systems Could Offer Additional Benefits to Public Safety in Your Community?**



**Do You Believe the Burglary False Alarm Problem Can Be Overcome?**



# nation's finest



Honeywell proudly salutes our nation's police officers—the brave men and women who risk their lives to make our communities safer each and every day. To you we pledge continued support and our promise to work together in partnership to keep our communities safe.

## Honeywell