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The Transmitter

Published Exclusively for EMERGENCY24, Inc. Dealers

www.emergency24.com

Spring 2008

Schedule Temporary Changes to Accounts for Future Events

The EMERGENCY24 Technical Department has developed an online function that allows temporary changes to be made to subscriber accounts for future events. With this new capability, dealers who have commercial subscribers that require supervised openings and closing can input a holiday schedule for an entire year. Dealers can also choose an off-set schedule for supervised openings and closings too.

Each temporary change will be recorded in the EMERGENCY24 system and will take effect only during the date and time specified by the dealer. Before and after the scheduled event, the original rules governing regular openings and closings will be in effect.

Another way this new feature can be useful to dealers is when a subscriber requests that a person be removed or added to a party list at a future date. A system-generated email sent to the dealer will identify the temporary changes requested for each account. These will serve as a reminder to make the change permanent after confirming the action with the subscriber.

All of these functions and more can be set-up on EMERGENCY24's Dealer Secure Services website. After logging in, a dealer can access a subscriber's account in the normal manner by inputting an account number and clicking **"Select."** Once the subscriber's account is loaded onto the screen, click on **"Accounts"** in the drop-down menu, then choose **"Temporary Change,"** and finally, **"Make a Temporary Change."**

This will load the **"Temporary Change"** page that allows dealers to choose the type

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Verification of Intrusion Alarms to Initiate Emergency Response

In most communities, when a burglar alarm is activated, police are dispatched by a central-station monitor to a specific location to determine the cause of the signal and check on the well-being of occupants. However, some cities and counties are experimenting with a practice called Verified Response – or Non-Response – if monitoring companies or alarm-system owners can not confirm there is an actual intrusion that requires police dispatch.

As an alternative to this dangerous policy, the security industry developed a widely accepted procedure called Enhanced Call Verification (ECV), which helps reduce false dispatches while still protecting tax-paying citizens. ECV requires central-station monitors to attempt to verify the alarm activation by making at least two phone calls to two different numbers before dispatching law enforcement to the protected location.

The first alarm-verification call is to the location where the alarm originated. If contact with a person is not made, a second call is placed to a different phone number. The secondary number, best practices dictate, should be to a telephone that is answered even after hours, preferably a cell phone of a decision maker who is authorized to request or bypass emergency response.

The state of Florida has affectively minimized alarms while maintaining the safety of tax payers by following ECV practices. As of July 1, 2006, the implementation date of the nation's first statewide ECV law, Palm Beach County Sheriff's Department reduced its dispatches from 12,712 between October 2005 and December 2005 to 8,802

during the same time in 2006.

Palm Beach County Deputy Charlie Mosher estimates that 80 percent of his department's dispatch reduction can be attributed to ECV, allowing officers to spend more time in trouble spots and become more proactive on their patrols. According to the Alarm Association of Florida, other counties in the state are showing a similar reduction in false dispatches too.

Following the success of Florida's program, in May 2007, Tennessee passed legislation that requires the practice of ECV throughout the state.

It is important end-users understand that ECV procedures are only used for burglar-alarm signals. All fire, medical, panic, hold-up or duress and robbery signals should follow the dispatch procedures required by local ordinances and policies of the Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ).

Software Solution

To complement ECV, another method that the security industry developed to satisfy the requirements of verified response is cross-zoning, which was first introduced by EMERGENCY24 as a software solution for problem properties that consistently requested unwarranted dispatches.

Cross-zoning satisfies the requirements of verified response without endangering civilians who would otherwise have to determine the source of an alarm before police will respond.

To build a cross-zoned alarm system, the designer must define a protection strategy capable of sending at least two separate signals for the protection of one area.

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Trend in Codes is to Minimize Alarm Response Time

Alarms-Over-Ethernet Technology is Fastest Mode to Communicate with the Central Station

Alarms-over-Ethernet technology is the future of the security industry.

Coming to maturation at a time when the sun has set on AMPS equipment, Internet Protocol (IP) alarm communication is the technology dealers must now consider to best serve their commercial and residential customers' long-term interests.

By sending alarm signals via the Internet instead of POTS lines, alarm dealers can ensure their installations are compatible with emerging hardware for years to come. Further than compatibility, the efficiency of alarm transmission will be in line with the latest standards, such as the ninth edition of UL 864, which goes into effect on December 31, 2008.

System Efficiency

Most alarm hardware vendors now offer systems that facilitate IP communication with the central station.

"The industry appears to be considering movement in that direction. Many hardware vendors have packages that allow remote reporting and remote interaction where the system checks in or has a signal automatically sent to the central station. Supplemental announcement of some fire-alarm systems are already transmitting supervisory and alarm conditions over Internet," said Ken Gentile, a senior consulting fire-protection engineer for Rolf Jensen & Associates Inc. The reason fire signals are "supplemental" is that NFPA 72, The National Fire Alarm Code, has not made clear provisions for IP alarm communication. "NFPA 72 does not specifically prohibit sending alarms over the Internet," Gentile pointed out. "I think the biggest issues are that you need certain back-up provisions, replications and supervision capabilities. Off-site reporting of fire-alarm system conditions must have reliability and survivability."

Update Accounts by Entering Data into New EM24 .pdf Forms

EMERGENCY24 now offers the Subscriber Monitoring Agreement in an Adobe Portable Document File (.pdf) format that allows dealers to input account data directly to the file that can be saved, printed, signed and ultimately sent to EMERGENCY24.

The editable file is available for download from the Literature page in the EM24 Secure Dealer Services website.

Code Compliance

To transmit fire-alarm signals in compliance with NFPA 72 requires meeting the standards set forth by UL 827 (*Standards for Central Station Alarm Service*), which also means being in line with UL 864 (*Standard for Control Units for Fire-Protective Signaling Systems*).

The significance of UL 864 is that the ninth edition, which was updated from a standard written in 1986, dramatically cuts allowable time to transmit signals from the initiating device to the panel.

Previously, a 90-second signal processing time for announcement of an alarm from the time an initiating device was tripped was acceptable. The new standard narrows the window for alarm transmission down to 10 seconds. And because UL 864 is an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standard, it is the law of the land.

This is a direct reflection of the capabilities that the digital age has brought to life-safety systems. It also foreshadows where the industry "performance requirements" are heading, code-wise.

"Any innovations that manufacturers might be developing may be released at the 2008 World Safety Conference & Exposition in June," Gentile said. "If the codes and listing agencies accept the technology, IP alarm communication could begin to come into use soon."

For burglar alarms, acceptance and use of IP alarm communication has progressed further down the road with about a dozen of manufacturers offering systems already. This wide breadth of platforms gives dealers many choices when putting a new system together and allows easy retrofits to upgrade customers to the next-generation technology.

IP Systems EM24 Supports

EMERGENCY24 offers six options for Internet alarm communication. They are, in some cases similar, but vastly different in other areas. These systems include:

- Bosch
- DMP (Digital Alarm Products)
- GE/Osborne-Hoffman
- Napco
- DSC
- AlarmNet-i.

New Strategies Required

With an estimated 26 million "legacy" alarm systems across the United States, alarm dealers must look to direct IP alarm communication using broadband connections as the bridge to the next generation of hardware devices.

Taking into account that the new UL 864 requirements call for dramatically faster communication between initiating devices and alarm announcement, the next logical step is to streamline alarm transmission from the panel to the central station.

That's because traditional alarm communication from the panel to the central station usually takes between 30 to 60 seconds. With IP transmission, communication is almost instantaneous.

"The codes will require a back-up like wireless or cellular and the software would have to be designed so that it would automatically kick in if there was a failure," said Gentile of IP communication. "But the cost differential is minimal between the two technologies. Once the codes accept it, IP communication will be the better way to do it."

Verification of alarms using hardware and software (continued from page 1)

The way cross-zoning works is that identifiable signals are generated at the premises to be sent to EMERGENCY24.

With multiple sensors in place to monitor one area, EMERGENCY24 software analyzes input from various sources to confirm if there is an intruder. If a motion detector trips in one area, the signal is recorded and the monitor notifies the subscriber and others who are listed as being responsible for the alarm system. A second alarm signal – received in an adjacent zone in close time proximity (variable based on community), is the confirmation the monitor needs to request a dispatch immediately. This builds in increased protection and a fail safe should a door blow open or a bird rattle an exterior window.

Hardware Solution

One hardware solution to verify the need for law enforcement is through an impact-activated audio alarm system that, when triggered, sets off a silent alarm and enables EMERGENCY24 monitors to determine the nature of the event by listening to sounds coming from the facility. Using this stealth approach to monitor a property yields important information to assist police if they are needed. Not only will monitors be able to confirm the event, but oftentimes, supply valuable intelligence to the police, such as the number of people in a building or anything else the intruders may say or do that makes sound.

A second hardware solution is to

Future Temporary Changes

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of data they would like to update. There are text fields identified as "Start" and "Expiration" to add effective dates and times for the temporary change. The "Start" and "Expiration" dates must be within 30 days of each other and the event must take place during the next 12 months. Under "Details of Temporary Changes," dealers can view all the Scheduled Temporary Changes for an account.

In the next issue of the *Transmitter*, we'll list even more functions this new capability allows EMERGENCY24 dealers. Until then, if you have any questions, contact the Technical Department at (800) 926-1511.

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incorporate a series of cameras to provide visual verification – or enough information to deny – that there is need for emergency dispatch.

Video verification documents a change in local conditions by using cameras to record video signals or image snapshots. The source images can be sent over a communication link, usually an IP network, to EMERGENCY24 where monitors retrieve the images through proprietary software. The information is then relayed to law-enforcement and recorded to an event file, which can later be used as prosecution evidence.

An example of how this system works is when a "passive infrared" sensor – or any other – is triggered, a designated number of video frames from before and after the event is sent to the central station. A trained monitoring professional then closely studies the output to identify for customers and police the cause of the signal and sends the data to authorized parties.

A second video solution can be incorporated into a standard panel, which sends EMERGENCY24 an alarm. When a signal is received, a trained monitoring professional accesses a digital video recorder (DVR) through an IP link to determine the cause of the activation. For this type of system, the camera input to the DVR reflects the alarm panel's zones and partitioning, which allows the monitor to look for an alarm source in multiple areas.

New Headquarters for EMERGENCY24 in 2008

By Patrick Devereaux

The Chicago branch of EMERGENCY24 will move to 999 East Touhy in Des Plaines, Illinois, during the second half of 2008.

Originally, the company planned to build a new facility at our current location, but it became evident last summer that construction as we wanted it might not be possible.

We searched far and wide until we decided upon 999 East Touhy because it had the most to offer the company.

Located ten miles from our current headquarters, right next to the Allstate Arena on Interstate U.S. 90, the location provides excellent signage visibility and O'Hare Airport is just minutes away.

Both camera hardware and listen-in intercoms have improved with each product generation, raising quality and lowering cost significantly. Also, because

of advancements in information technology and data compression standards that allow much heavier loads of data transmission, video and audio devices are now commonly integrated into a building's Ethernet system.

Other System Uses

When a business or residence is unattended, EMERGENCY24 monitors can "look in" on any camera connected to the system and perform a video "guard tour" of the area to report exceptional conditions, events or unauthorized entry, potentially eliminating the need for on-site guard services. "Look-in" service also provides an additional layer of protection against collusion that is not possible via in-house verification.

Without a doubt, there are economic benefits of security and IT systems integration, including shared infrastructure. Due to the maturation of alarms-over-Ethernet technology, AHJs across the country have been convinced that IP-based systems provide secure, redundant and reliable communication.

With these types of verification services, EMERGENCY24 monitors, alarm-system owners and security personnel are able to safely investigate the source of an alarm without having to blindly walk into a situation where armed criminals could be startled.

It is my opinion that after the new central station is constructed, EM24 will be further ahead of the industry's technological curve than ever before. We will be very comfortable at this location for many years to come.



The 999 East Touhy Building in Des Plaines, Illinois