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 alarm – if monitoring companies or alarm-system owners cannot 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 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 number that could be the residence of the property owner or a contact number for the alarm-system owner. If contact is not made, a third call is made at a later time, preferably a cell phone of a decision maker who is authorized to request or bypass emergency response.

The state of Florida has effectively minimized alarms while maintaining the safety of taxpayers by following ECV practices. As of July 1, 2006, the 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 additional time on crime prevention and investigation.

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.

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 closings can input a holiday schedule for an entire year. Dealers can also choose an offset 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 times 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. Dealers can enter the new information on the “Temporary Changes to Accounts” menu in the EMERgency24 system.

To set up these functions and more, dealers should log in to the EMERgency24 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 of temporary change.

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New Headquarters for EMERgency24 in 2008

By Patrick Devereaux

We searched far and wide until we decided upon 999 East Touhy because it had the most to offer the company. 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 will be very comfortable at this 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. Until then, if you have any questions, contact the Technical Department at (800) 926-1511.