

**Two-Alarm Dispatch Policy  
And The New False Alarm Fee and Penalty Structure  
End of the Year Status Report**

Issue

On January 1, 2004, the Los Angeles Police Commission implemented a two-alarm dispatch policy, one of the two-pronged approaches in reducing the number of responses to false burglar alarm activations. This report compares the alarm statistics in 2003, 2004, and 2005. The first part of this report discusses the impact of the two-alarm policy on calls for service related to burglar alarms. The Department's Information Technology Division and the City's Information Technology Agency and Office of Finance provided the data that form the basis for this report.

Beginning January 3, 2005, the Los Angeles Police Commission assessed new false alarm fees and penalties on an escalating rate to each false alarm. This new fee and penalty structure is the second component of the two-pronged approach to reducing the number of responses to false burglar alarm activations. The latter part of this report provides information on the amount collected from false alarm fees in 2003, 2004, and 2005.

This report also provides information on the number of alarm permits obtained in 2003, 2004, and 2005.

Analysis

An analysis of 2005 alarm data demonstrates a continued decline in the number of alarm incidents with a 24% decrease, or 28,866 fewer alarm calls received by LAPD dispatchers. This reprises significant numbers in 2004, which reflected a 28% decrease from the prior year. Alarm dispatches those calls for which a police unit was assigned, showed a 22% decline or 17,765 fewer alarm dispatches. This encores positive figures in 2004, which reflected a 27% decrease from 2003. However, the false alarm rate, which measures the percentage of false alarms of the total number of alarm dispatches, remained constant at 97% for three consecutive years.

**Comparison of 2003, 2004, and 2005**

<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>Jan-Dec 2003</b>	<b>Jan-Dec 2004*</b>	<b>% Difference 2003-2004</b>	<b>Jan-Dec 2005</b>	<b>% Difference 2004-2005</b>
Total calls for service**	811,494	797,252	-2% (14,242 calls)	743,438	-7% (53,814 calls)
Number of alarm incidents	168,847	122,133	-28% (6,714 alarm incidents)	93,267	-24% (28,866 alarm incidents)
Number of alarm dispatches	109,295	79,882	-27% (29,413 alarm dispatches)	62,117	-22% (17,765 alarm dispatches)
Number of canceled alarm dispatches	59,552	42,251	-29% (17,301 canceled alarm dispatches)	31,150	-26% (11,101 alarm dispatches)

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End of the Year Status Report**

<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>Jan-Dec 2003</b>	<b>Jan-Dec 2004*</b>	<b>% Difference 2003-2004</b>	<b>Jan-Dec 2005</b>	<b>% Difference 2004-2005</b>
Number of false alarms	105,896	77,578	-27% (28,318 false alarms)	60,026	-23% (17,552 false alarms)
Percent false alarms	97%	97%	No difference	97%	No difference
Percent canceled incidents	35%	35%	No difference	33%	-2%
Percent alarm dispatches of total calls for service	13%	10%	-3%	8%	-2%

\*Denotes leap year (29 days) in February 2004

\*\*Excludes traffic calls

An analysis of the false alarm picture since the inception of the two-alarm dispatch policy reveals steady progress in reducing both alarm incidents and alarm dispatches. There are significant decreases in the quantity of alarm dispatches in 2005 when contrasted with nearly 7,000 alarm dispatches per month experienced in 2004 and approximately 9,200 alarm dispatches per month in 2003. However, on average the Department is dispatched on nearly 5,200 alarm calls per month, which translates to slightly more than 62,000 alarm calls in 2005.

**Alarm Activity in 2003, 2004, and 2005**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Jan-Dec 2003</b>	<b>Jan-Dec 2004*</b>	<b>Rate of Change 2003 and 2004</b>	<b>Jan-Dec 2005</b>	<b>Rate of Change 2004 and 2005</b>
Alarm incidents	168,847	122,133	-28% (6,714 alarm incidents)	93,267	-24% (28,866 alarm incidents)
Alarm dispatches	109,295	79,882	-27% (29,413 alarm dispatches)	62,117	-22% (17,765 alarm dispatches)
Dispatched calls as % of Total alarm incidents	65%	65%	No Change	67%	+2%
Alarm calls cancelled	59,552	42,251	-29% (17,301 calls)	31,150	-26% (11,101 calls)
Cancellation rate	35%	35%	No Change	33%	-2%
False alarms	105,896	77,578	-27% (28,318 false alarms)	60,026	-23% (17,552 false alarms)
False alarm rate	97%	97%	No Change	97%	No Change

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The chart below contrasts the alarm dispatches to the total number of calls for service. Alarm dispatches are those calls for police service caused by alarm activations, which are not cancelled before the police arrive at the scene. Service requests that are initiated by an alarm monitoring company and later canceled are quantified separately. The figures in the table below indicate that alarm dispatches average slightly higher than 8% of all calls for service for 2005. In prior years, the percentage of alarm dispatches to calls for service was as high as 15%. In 2004, the percentage declined substantially to 10%, which is a 3% decrease compared to 2003.

**Alarm Dispatches as a Percentage of  
Total Calls for Service in 2003, 2004, and 2005**

Description	Jan-Dec 2003	Jan-Dec 2004*	Jan-Dec 2005
Alarm Dispatches	109,295	79,882	62,117
Total calls for service**	811,494	797,252	743,438
Alarms as a % of total calls	13%	10%	8%

\*Denotes leap year (29 days) in February 2004

\*\*Excludes traffic calls

*Broadcast and File Data*

As reflected in the chart below, 22,013 alarm calls that would previously have been assigned to a patrol unit were broadcast and filed under the two-alarm dispatch policy. This represents 24 % of nearly 93,300 alarm incidents in 2005.

Description	JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2005*
Addresses with two or more false alarms within a 365-day period	9,730
Addresses with three or more false alarms within a 365-day period	1,797
Alarm calls broadcast and filed	22,013

\*This data is derived from the FAS database and reflects disposition changes due to waivers, etc.

*Cost Recovery Information*

The second component of the two-pronged approach in reducing responses to false burglar alarm activations was the imposition of the new fee and penalty structure on an escalating rate to each false alarm. False alarm fees and penalties are assessed to recoup the cost expended in

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responding to false alarms. The chart below illustrates the billing system under the revised alarm ordinance.

False Alarms	With permit	Without permit
1 <sup>st</sup>	\$115	\$115 + \$100
2 <sup>nd</sup>	\$115 + \$50	\$115 + \$200
3 <sup>rd</sup>	\$115 + \$100	\$115 + \$300
4 <sup>th</sup>	\$115 + \$150	\$115 + \$400

These new fees and penalty assessments were applied to false alarms beginning January 3, 2005. The delay in implementation was largely due to technological issues that have to be addressed on the false alarm tracking/billing system and accounts receivables system of the City of Los Angeles. The table below depicts the cost recovery information in 2003, 2004, and 2005.

Description	2003	2004	2005
Total amount billed	\$5,685,104	\$4,017,714	\$7,287,013
Total amount paid	\$2,575,696.92	\$1,443,650.39	\$4,045,221.40
Total amount waived	\$627,188	\$453,745	\$557,877
Total outstanding amount	\$2,482,219.08	2,120,318.61	\$2,683,914.60

*Alarm Permit Information*

The alarm ordinance requires an alarm system user to obtain an alarm permit to operate an alarm system. Only monitored alarm systems on residences and businesses are assessed a permit fee of \$31 with an annual renewal fee of \$30. Non-monitored alarm systems on residences and alarm systems on government offices, embassies, or consular offices or residences are exempt from the permit fee. The chart below shows that the revised alarm ordinance played a significant role in the 8% increase in the number of alarm permits obtained in 2005 compared to 2003.

Number/Type of Alarm Permit	2003	Estimated Amount Collected	2004	Estimated Amount Collected	2005	Actual Amount Collected
Monitored Alarm System on Residences, and Businesses	110,029	\$3,300,870	113,285	\$3,398,550	119,293	\$3,768,206
Residential Non-Monitored	3,062	\$0	3,008	\$0	3,044	\$0
Government-Exempt	1,821	\$0	1,787	\$0	1,758	\$0
Total Number	114,912	\$3,300,870	118,080	\$3,398,550	124,095	\$3,768,206

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Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board of Police Commissioners:

- 1) Adopt this report,
- 2) Forward this report to the Los Angeles City Council for informational purposes.