



## **Golden Police to Handle Intrusion Alarm Calls More Efficiently**

Effective immediately the Golden Police Department will begin handling intrusion (burglary) alarms in a more efficient manner. The police and/or fire personnel will continue to immediately respond to robbery, panic, medical, and fire alarms; however, the department has decided to adopt a form of "Verified Alarm Response" as our method for handling intrusion alarms. This simply means that some form of verification will be needed prior to having officers dispatched. Either the alarm company can choose to physically verify the validity of an alarm, or police officers will respond if there are factors that lead us to believe that the alarm is valid.

This new policy will place the responsibility for alarm verification where it belongs-with the companies that market, sell, and install those alarms; and, it will allow the police officers and supervisors to utilize discretion, common sense, and experience to evaluate the need to respond as they see fit.

All alarm calls will still be "aired" on the radio to officers in the area, and they will respond to the alarm if in their opinion, experience, and knowledge, a response is warranted. For example, they would certainly respond to an alarm occurring in multiple zones of a home or business or to an alarm in which a suspicious person is seen nearby. An officer can also use his/her discretion to respond based upon their knowledge of crime patterns in the area, time of day, or other information at their disposal.

For many years, the Golden Police Department has averaged well over 500 intrusion (burglary) alarms per year, accounting for nearly 3.5% of the total annual citizen-generated calls for service. Of those calls, 99% are consistently found to be false alarms often requiring the response of two officers who were then unavailable for other more serious calls such as preventing a crime, generating an arrest, or enhancing the safety of our citizens.

The 99% rate is consistent with that of police departments throughout the nation, and like those departments, our efforts to reduce the number have been unsuccessful. The Golden city ordinance mandating a permitting fee has not had an impact on reducing the false alarm rate. As a result, we will no longer be utilizing a permitting structure. However, we will continue to bill for excessive false alarms.

Similar "Verified Alarm Response" programs in Arvada, Westminster, Aurora, Ft. Collins, Loveland, Thornton and Lakewood have all been extremely successful. In the case of all these cities, the false alarm rate dropped dramatically after implementation of the program with no increase in the incidence of burglary.

If you have any questions about this new method of handling intrusion alarms, please contact the Golden Police Department at 303-384-8045.