OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

MEMORANDUM

March 24, 2016

TO: Nancy Floreen, President
Montgomery County Council

FROM: Isiah Leggett, County Executive

SUBJECT: Implementation of Chapter 3A, Alarms

Attached please find the 2015 annual report on implementation of the False Alarm Reduction Program by the Department of Police, as required in §3A-11, Report, of Chapter 3A, Alarms, of the Montgomery County Code.

I am pleased to report that Montgomery County has been able to maintain its incredibly low level of false-alarm reduction in spite of a continuing increase of alarm users in 2015. Montgomery County recouped 5,384 hours of Police Officer time in 2015 as a direct result of the False Alarm Reduction Section's (FARS) efforts to reduce false alarms. Additionally, FARS staff collected $1,212,637 in revenues.

Just over 74,000 alarm users—who represent 87.3% of all alarm users—had zero false alarms in 2015. This proves that false alarm *prevention*—not just *reduction*—is possible, and is happening in Montgomery County. False alarm dispatch rates continue to be some of the lowest of anywhere in the entire country, with our residential-alarm users experiencing, on average, only one false alarm every six years. It is rare that a false alarm reduction program continues to see such dramatic successes after 20 years. This is a program of which we can all be proud.

Should you have any further questions about this report, feel free to contact the Department's FARS director, Alberto Hook: **240-773-6310**.

IL:mam

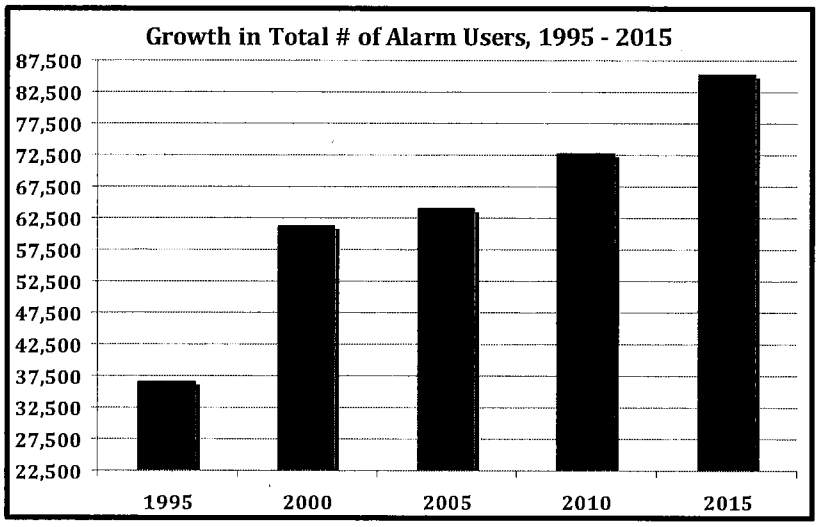
Attachment

c: Chief Manger, MCPD

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

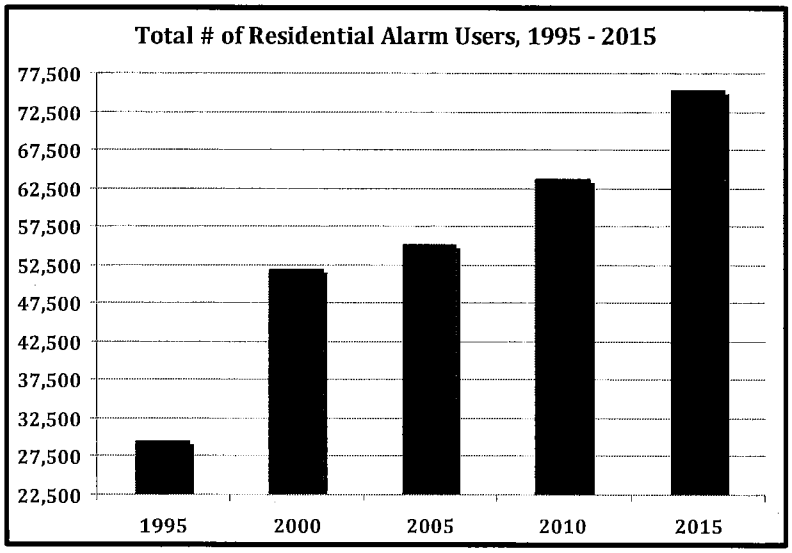
FALSE ALARM REDUCTION PROGRAM 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

MARCH 2016



The alarm user registration renewal process permits FARS to keep the alarm user database current by removing those users who no longer have an alarm system or have moved from the County. This allows FARS to perform statistical analysis using more accurate numbers, which provides for more meaningful reporting.

Overall, Montgomery County has experienced an increase in total alarm registrants since 1994 (134%), driven primarily by the number of residential alarm users – more than 75,000 users - an increase of 156.2%.



Alarm Responses

A false alarm is an alarm system activation that results in a dispatch request that is not cancelled prior to the arrival of law enforcement at the site, and in which the responding authority finds no evidence of criminal activity to justify a police response. There are several common causes of false alarms:

False Alarm Rates

The false alarm rate is the most common measure of false alarm reduction, as it calculates the number of false alarm dispatches relative to the total number of alarm users.

Year	Total Registered Users	Total False Alarms	False Alarm Rate
1994	29,756	42,821[2]	1.44
1999	58,143	24,400	.42
2004	63,748	17,624	.28
2009	71,011	16,816	.24
2015	85,167	16,967	.20

This table demonstrates that although the total number of registered users has increased over the last twenty years, the false alarm dispatch rate has continued to drop. Montgomery County's dispatch rates remain among the lowest in the country.

Another measure of program effectiveness is the total number of alarm users who had NO false alarms. In 2015, a total of 74,313 alarm users had ZERO false alarms; essentially, 87.3% of all alarm users in Montgomery County successfully managed their alarm systems/programs. In 1995, the year after the county alarm code was implemented; only 56.2% of the registered alarm users had no false alarms. This is a significant improvement, given the increase in the total number of users. The chart below represents the false alarm numbers over the last two decades.

2015 *Total Users = 85,167*		2005 *Total Users = 63,970*		1995 *Total Users = 36,436*	
False Alarms	Alarm Users	False Alarms	Alarm Users	False Alarms	Alarm Users
0	74,313	0	53,240	0	20,468
1-2	9,708	1-2	9,550	1-2	13,362
3-5	934	3-5	982	3-5	1,988
6-15	199	6-15	190	6-15	599
16-31	13	16-31	18	16-31	19

A closer examination reveals that commercial alarm users have improved 208.4% since 1995 towards the achievement of no false alarms, while residential users have been 271% more successful in managing false alarms. In 1995, nearly 7% of all commercial alarm users had six or more false alarms. In 2015, commercial alarm users accounted for all users with six or more false. The percentages of residential alarm users with six or more false alarms are already very small, but there were no residential users in 2015 in this category as compared to 16 users in 2014.

[2] *The number of verified calls for 1994 is unknown. 42,821 is the total number of alarm dispatches that occurred.*

The first chart covers *calendar* year 2015. The second chart covers *fiscal* year 2015. The FY2015 chart is included only as a reference because budget projections are based on fiscal rather than calendar years. The more accurate chart is the calendar year 2015 chart, as false alarms and the resultant false alarm response fees are calculated on a calendar year basis.

CALENDAR YEAR 2015	ACTUAL REVENUES
Alarm User Registration Fees	
Residential	$158,825
Commercial	17,970
TOTAL	**$176,795**
Alarm User Registration Renewal Fees	
Residential	$258,780
County Attorney Collections	1,228
Total Residential	**$260,008**
Commercial	$31,895
County Attorney Collections	170
Total Commercial	**$32,065**
TOTAL	**$292,073**
False Alarm Response Fees	
Residential	$100,343
County Attorney Collections	9,153
Total Residential	**$109,496**
Commercial	$441,547
County Attorney Collections	22,942
Total Commercial	**$464,489**
TOTAL	**$573,985**
Alarm Business Fees	
License	$ 56,400
Civil Citations	112,500
Administrative Fees	464
TOTAL	**$169,364**
Appeal Filing Fees	
Residential	$315
Commercial	105
TOTAL	**$420**
Alarm User Civil Citations	
Residential	$ 000
Commercial	000
TOTAL	**$ 000**
GRAND TOTAL	**$1,212,637**

CALENDAR YEARS COMPARISON	ACTUAL REVENUES		
	2013	**2014**	**2015**
Alarm User Registration Fees			
Residential	$163,190	$151,400	$158,825
Commercial	20,850	19,130	17,970
TOTAL	**$184,040**	**$170,530**	**$176,795**
Alarm User Registration Renewal Fees			
Residential	$243,605	$228,060	$258,780
County Attorney Collections	2,250	2,210	1,228
Total Residential	**$245,855**	**$230,270**	**$260,008**
Commercial	$30,610	$30,665	$31,895
County Attorney Collections	890	570	170
Total Commercial	**$31,500**	**$31,235**	**$32,065**
TOTAL	**$277,355**	**$261,505**	**$292,073**
False Alarm Response Fees			
Residential	$ 84,172	$94,252	$100,343
County Attorney Collections	28,240	24,878	9,153
Total Residential	**$ 112,412**	**$119,130**	**$109,496**
Commercial	$305,161	$305,436	$441,547
County Attorney Collections	36,135	33,700	22,942
Total Commercial	**$341,296**	**$339,136**	**$464,489**
TOTAL	**$453,708**	**$458,266**	**$573,985**
Alarm Business Fees			
License	$ 79,000	$ 67,300	$ 56,400
Civil Citations	208,600	285,500	112,500
Administrative Fees	1,036	504	464
TOTAL	**$288,636**	**$353,304**	**$169,364**
Appeal Filing Fees			
Residential	$255	$255	$315
Commercial	105	135	105
TOTAL	**$360**	**$390**	**$420**
Alarm User Civil Citations			
Residential	$ 000	$ 000	$ 000
Commercial	100	000	000
TOTAL	**$ 100**	**$ 000**	**$ 000**
GRAND TOTAL	**$1,204,199**	**$1,243,995**	**$1,212,637**

Collection of false alarm response fees is always a priority for the FARS. Strict enforcement of this aspect of the alarm law clearly shows that Montgomery County is serious about the issue of false alarms. This tool is the ability to place accounts in which alarm users fail to remit the required false alarm response fees into a denied response status. Along with the denied response status, accounts are referred to the Office of the County Attorney for collection action.

There must be continuing education performed and early intervention with alarm users who are experiencing false alarms so that they do not reach unacceptable thresholds and waste valuable resources. In 2015 the FARS ability to enforce the major offender project, which reaches out to alarm users experiencing excessive false alarms was stalled due to staffing shortages. The major offender project is instrumental in ensuring that alarm users experiencing excessive false alarms are educated about their alarm system and the impact to police resources. Although the number of alarm users that exceeded the 6 to 31 false alarm count in a calendar year increased for commercial alarm users in 2015, there were no residential alarm users in this category. In 2016 the FARS staff will work diligently to intervene and educate the alarm users that fall into this category quickly and expeditiously to ensure we reduce the number of alarm users in this range.

In 2015 the FARS migrated all of the false alarm billing and tracking to a new system called CryWolf. The FARS is now fully functional on the new system and proud to offer the residents of Montgomery County the ability to pay their response and renewal fees via the internet. Additionally, the residents will now be able to register their locations via the internet as well. The online portal will provide the residents of Montgomery County with a "one-stop-shop" to manage their account environment from the comfort of their homes.