

## POLICE NOTEBOOK

**B**URGLAR ALARMS – Peace against villains or villains of the peace?

Modern technology and a rising crime rate has meant that these devices are being fitted in more homes and businesses each year. With so many alarm companies to choose from, selecting the right firm can be somewhat of a dilemma. Find out from neighbours and friends the companies they recommend.

Thames Valley Police have now introduced a new burglar alarm policy which is intended to reduce false alarms calls which have in the past accounted for 84% of all alarm responses being false calls. This of course represents a heavy burden on manpower and equipment use. Householders and alarm companies are being asked to tighten up on their devices. Systems must be installed with more care and receive regular servicing. Up to date key holders must also be supplied to alarm companies and clear directions to isolated premises are essential. Our new policy follows up previous activations to see whether there is a repetitious problem that can be sorted out. If false activations continue then these alarm systems will be down-graded until the system has been improved.

One area where householders can make great improvements is by making all their key holders more familiar with the system. Often alarms are set off by key holders, because they do not understand exactly what the system does and what area it protects.



Thames  
Valley  
Police

Many modern systems divide the area of protection into zones. There is little point having such a sophisticated system, if when activated, the key holder does not know the area of each zone.

Up until now many householders living near these alarms activations have had to put up with the constant noise, and therefore have become complacent as to whether these premises have been attacked. Over the years legislation has forced alarm companies to reduce the length of noise to a maximum of twenty minutes. However even this length of time seems endless. We have had two recent burglaries, in daylight hours, where offenders have activated burglar alarms and have made off with stolen property. For reasons unknown the police have not been informed despite the audible alarm sounding for many minutes.

If you do hear an alarm sounding, PLEASE DIAL 999 (it is free), even if you do not know exactly where it is coming from, don't worry, just ring. If every alarm activation is reported, then the false activations and unnecessary noise will be dramatically reduced and our response times for genuine emergencies, improved.

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