Welcome

Be an informed consumer

- **Choose the Right Company** - The Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association (TBFAA) recommends that consumers take the several steps BEFORE selecting a systems contractor. Visit the Selecting a Contractor page for More Information

- **Understand the Options** - A TBFAA Member systems professional will help you determine what components you need to serve your home or business. Visit the Types of Systems page for more information.

- **Discuss the Options** – Your systems professional should discuss what options fit your home and/or business and lifestyle, for instance, do you have small children, pets, are you away from your home for long periods of time, do you have expensive items such as jewelry you want to protect. All of these things may factor in to determine which system is best for you.

- **Combat False Alarms** - We believe the key to reducing false alarms is user and installer education. Visit the Combat False Alarm page for more information.

- **Select the System that Fits Your Needs** - You may decide to install a system for a specific purpose but keep in mind you can link other devices into your system such as security, fire, entertainment, controlled heating and lighting, and carbon monoxide detection. There can also be cost savings to combine those features versus installing them at a later date. It all depends on what you want and what suits you best. The best systems professional will customize your system for your needs!

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Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association, Inc., (TBFAA) is a non-profit organization of security professionals who have joined together to enrich the industry by providing membership training and representing the membership as a whole in the Texas Legislature, the Texas Private Security Bureau and the Texas Fire Marshal’s Office among many other programs.

The TRANSMITTER is published by the Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association, a Texas non-profit organization.

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Jeff Bright

As exciting as starting a new year is for most of us, it is especially exciting for me in this new position with the TBFAA. Looking back at 2013 is significant for me personally and saw some interesting changes for our industry. Before I comment on that, I would like to personally thank the Immediate Past President Mr. Rodney Hooker for his leadership and guidance of the TBFAA for the last two years.

For those of you not at our annual convention in Galveston last October you may not be aware of some changes to the board. For the first time in many years we have a new Training Director, her name is Whitney Crahan and I look forward to working with her and advancing our training goals. I also wish to thank Mr. Brian McKinney for his many, many years of volunteering his time to our organization as our Training Director.

We also have a new Associate Director, Mr. Randy Reyna. I have known Randy quite a while and I am sure that he will do a great job, but he does have big shoes to fill. The outgoing Associate Director Mr. Kelly Ryan was a go to resource for any information needed from our vendor partners and a genuinely nice guy that was always a joy to be around.

If you are in the electronic security business in Texas you should be aware by now that the regulatory landscape has changed a bit more than usual in the past year. While every odd numbered year brings surprising changes from our state legislature, 2013 seemed more like a Hollywood action movie with a last minute cliff-hanger that caught almost everyone by surprise. At the last minute language was inserted in a bill that mandates fingerprint submission upon individual registration renewal. Wow, that’s different. Oh yeah, all fingerprints are now electronic only. If you are renewing registrations, plan ahead.

We had good news on the fire alarm front with the approval of the TBFAA residential fire alarm technician course as well as the successful broadening of the pool of potential instructors through legislation. Mr. Roy Horn is continuing his erstwhile efforts with the State Fire Marshall’s Office and the Professional Engineers exempt status as it applies to designing commercial fire alarm systems that do not meet code.

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Please look at the Board of Directors in this Transmitter, they deserve our thanks. Many are returning members and they make this organization and our accomplishments possible. They give their time and effort to keep our industry informed and our state and local regulators accountable.

I wish everyone a prosperous New Year.

Jeff Bright
President, Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association
Fire Marshal’s Notice
December 2013

State Fire Marshal Reminder Related to Remote Monitoring of Fire Button Enabled Burglar Alarm Systems

It has come to the attention of the State Fire Marshal’s Office that some security systems with enabled fire panic buttons may not be monitored in accordance with adopted standards; in that the systems may not be set up to transmit the required test signal at least monthly. This may be due, in part, to misunderstandings related to the licensing exemption afforded to certain security companies in the Texas Insurance Code. The following is offered as clarification and as a reminder of the importance to remain in complete compliance with all provisions, rules, regulations and/or statutes enacted to regulate the planning, certifying, leasing, selling, servicing, installing, monitoring, and maintaining of fire detection and fire alarm devices and systems in Texas.

Licensing Exemption

The licensing provisions related to engaging in the fire alarm business do not apply to an individual or organization licensed to install or service burglar alarms under Chapter 1702, Occupations Code, that provides and installs in a single-family or two-family residence a combination keypad that includes a panic button to initiate a fire alarm signal if the fire alarm signal: (A) is monitored by a registered fire alarm firm; and (B) is not initiated by a fire or smoke detection device.  Texas Insurance Code Sec. 6002.155(11)

This section exempts a security company installing this type system from being licensed for fire alarm, but does not exempt the installation and monitoring from being provided in accordance with adopted standards.

Remote Monitoring / Test Signals

NFPA 72 (National Fire Alarm Code) specifies the performance requirements for remote monitoring of alarm signals from household systems. Included in this, is the requirement that each alarm transmitter shall automatically initiate and complete a test signal transmission sequence at least monthly.  NFPA 72 (2007) - 11.7.8 & 8.6.3.2.1.5(6)

In setting up these accounts, the supervising station must ensure that adopted standards are followed and the automatic test signals are enabled. Failure to receive a test signal is treated as a trouble signal and the station operator must initiate action appropriate to the type of service being provided (central station, remote station). The subscriber and/or the installing firm cannot waive these requirements.

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Elections were held at the TBFAA Annual Meeting in Galveston. Jeff Bright was elected as President, Brant Pierce as Vice President Security, Roy Horn as Vice President Fire, Debi Ulmer as Secretary and Malcolm Reed as Treasurer.

Mary Edmonson was elected as Membership Director, Whitney Crahen as Training Director and Randy Reyna as Associate Director.

Joe Viavattene, Nathan Bryant, Sonny Sampson and Joe Carr were Elected as Regional Directors.

Three long term members of the board are off the board as a result of the election.

**Kelly Ryan** joined the board as Associate Director in 2006. Kelly is always willing to help, with good humor and energy that made the meetings and events fun.

“He always has a smile on his face and is always in a good mood. I remember he always had good suggestions on trying new things to help the Association. Since Kelly came from an installing company background it enabled him to present views from alarm dealers as well as from Associate Members. I know back when we were trying to get the Austin Chapter started, Kelly spent an enormous amount of time talking to Dealers and generating interest and he is the main reason that Chapter got off the ground.” said Chip Bird, TBFAA Past President.

**Brian McKinney** joined the Board first as HGCAA President in 2002 and then as Training Director in 2004. Brian gave hours of his time attending meetings and teaching classes. He recruited new instructors and help to update the training classes. In addition he served as the photographer at the TBFAA Conventions.

“I think Brian made the ultimate sacrifice of a small business owner. He gave his time and was willing to get involved. For ten years that I know of. A lot of that time was spent teaching classes which included many of his competitors which never seemed to bother him. Brian is a very sharp individual and I am amazed at his vast knowledge of the technology used in the alarm industry. He is very opinionated and vocal which is good because a lot of the time what he was talking about had merit. I remember my first opportunity to work with Brian after I became President, was when we went to a telecommunications meeting at the PUC in Austin. Brian ended up dominating the meeting and making all in attendance aware of exactly how VoIP affected alarm systems.” said Chip Bird, TBFAA Past President.

**Mary Cannedy Seigler** joined the Board as the Region1 Director in 2010. She reached out to members throughout the large region of west Texas and travelled many miles to attend the TBFAA meetings. In addition she has served on the Convention Committee for several years.

“I have had the pleasure to serve with Mary over many years on the TBFAA Board, she has always been very generous to offer her time to our profession as a volunteer and a leader. She has traveled and worked countless hours as a board member, convention volunteer and proctor all for the betterment of the security profession. All will miss her bright smile, positive attitude and wisdom that she brought to our board, but we hope to see her and Jim for many years at future conventions.” Debi Ulmer, TBFAA Secretary
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The Texas Board of Professional Engineers (TBPE) just sent the Policy Advisory shown below out today to all their engineers in the State of Texas. Even though this policy was established and sent out originally in April, 2004, TBPE has decided they needed to refocus on the problems at hand. The last couple of paragraphs are very direct. When I last spoke with TBPE, Mr. C. W. Clark, Director of Compliance and Enforcement, indicated that our initial recommendation letter to TBPE had also circulated through their BOD and their attorney.

We also got the State Fire Marshal’s office (SFMO) involved and I think SFMO and TBPE talked about the situation--just my opinion. Whatever the case, I think through our TBFAA’s fire alarm committee’s efforts, we have a good relationship with both TBPE and SFMO, and a good working relationship. Also, the State Fire Marshal’s office will be adding some clarification to meaning of “Exempt”. Even though it may not be exactly everything we wanted, it is a positive step forward.

In my opinion, this would never have happened if presented by a sole individual, but through the strength of numbers in our association, other authorities have listened to our needs.

Texas Board of Professional Engineers
Policy Advisory Approved: April 22, 2004
Planning of Fire Alarm Systems

Purpose
To clarify the extent to which the planning of fire detection devices and fire alarm systems is considered the "Practice of Engineering," as defined in Section 2, Definitions, of the Texas Engineering Practice Act.

Background
This policy statement has been developed with the assistance of an ad hoc committee of engineers and professionals in the fire protection industry, appointed through the State Fire Marshal’s Office and the Texas Board of Professional Engineers. The intent is to clarify engineering functions in the planning of fire alarm systems. The State Fire Marshal’s Office currently issues licenses to qualified persons to plan fire alarm systems. The Texas Board of Professional Engineers issues licenses to qualified persons to engage in the practice of engineering in Texas. Primarily, assurance that qualified persons are responsible for the planning of these systems in accordance with all local, state, and national codes prompted the discussion and clarification. Where the fire safety codes and installation standards are prescriptive they require little, if any, engineering judgment for an acceptable installation.

Policy
The Planning of fire detection devices and fire alarm systems performed by or under the direct supervision of a licensed individual is not considered the "Practice of Engineering" if:

1. The layout is within the scope of the applicable prescriptive code or standard, such as the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 72 "National Fire Alarm Code" when specified by an engineer or adopted by the state or local jurisdiction; and

2. The licensed individual currently holds a "Fire Alarm Planning Superintendent" license (APS) issued by the Texas State Fire Marshal's Office in accordance with the Texas Insurance Code Article 5.43-2; and

Continued on page 14
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3. The licensed individual is certified to a minimum level III, in the subfield of "Fire Alarm Systems", through the National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies (NICET); and

4. Upon completion of the installation a licensed individual, where given the specific authority by Texas Statute, will perform an on-site inspection and certify in writing that the installation meets the standards provided for by law and/or is in compliance with the plans of the licensed fire alarm planning superintendent or licensed professional engineer.

Professional Engineer’s Responsibilities

Engineering for fire detection devices and fire alarm systems by a Texas licensed professional engineer shall be limited to:

1. Engineers who are competent in Fire Protection Engineering by passing the fire protection exam, education, or demonstration of significant experience.

2. Licensed Professional Engineers who maintain continuing education and familiarity with the applicable codes and standards in this area of expertise. Licensed professional engineers who specify (by writing in lieu of plans) the installation of fire detection devices and fire alarm systems should, as a minimum, identify on the construction plans and documents:

   1. The applicable prescriptive codes and/or standards; and
   2. The specific building use and/or occupancy classification (as designated in the applicable building code or as interpreted by the Building Official); and/or
   3. Describe the function, placement, performance, and operation of the devices or system by which to correctly plan the system(s).

Licensed professional engineers, who plan the installation of fire detection devices and fire alarm systems, shall as a minimum:

1. Prepare construction plans and documents that depict the required components and devices for a complete fire detection devices and fire alarm systems in accordance with the applicable codes and standards; and
2. Sign, date, seal, and prepare plans in accordance with the Texas Engineering Practices Act; and
3. Be responsible for the complete design in compliance with applicable codes subject to sanctions by the Board of Professional Engineers.

The Board will aggressively enforce, levy sanctions and/or recommend restitution for infractions of the Texas Engineering Practice Act, when engineers sign, date, seal, and distribute design plans and documents for the installation of fire detection and fire alarm devices and systems, in which the engineer did not endeavor to comply with applicable national, state, or local building and fire codes.

The Board encourages building and fire officials, who review plans in Texas municipalities, to file a complaint with the Texas Board of Professional Engineers, whenever they review plans, signed, dated, and sealed or stamped by an engineer, which are not in compliance with the applicable state or local codes. Complaint forms are available on the Board web site at www.tbpe.state.tx or by calling the enforcement division at (512) 440-7723.

TBFAA News—Fire Course & Consumer Site

Brad Shipp, TBFAA

Residential Fire Alarm Technician

TBFAA has received approval from the State Fire Marshal as a school to provide training to meet the requirements for the Residential Fire Alarm Technician license (RAL).

The 8 hour course covers Texas Law & Rules, NFPA 72 Household Requirements, NFPA 70-National Electrical Code, International Residential Code, applicable sections of NFPA 101 and UL monitoring requirements. An RAL licensee is permitted to install, service, inspect, and certify residential single-family or two-family fire alarm or detection systems.

Visit www.tbfaa.org for a class schedule.

TBFAA Launches Consumer site

TBFAA has created a website for consumers with information on types of systems, false alarm reduction and how to select a contractor.

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Person of the Year Roy Horn with his wife Patsy

Past President Rodney Hooker with Rep. Allen Fletcher

Vice President Roy Horn, Past President Rodney Hooker & President Jeff Bright

Texas State Director of Fire Alarms Mark Lockerman

Ron Davis

Ken Kirschenbaum
Debi Ulmer, TBFAA

"Police officers may drive black and white cars, however what goes on in their job is a lot of gray."
- Arik Matson

This quote speaks volumes about Larry Shimek.

Over the past 13 years many of us have had the opportunity to get to know Larry as law enforcement professional, as a confidant (or should I say a confidential informant) and as a friend.

He will always be known for his strong ethics of enforcement as well as his compassion and the ability to see truth in people.

His retirement is a loss to our profession but not to the friendships he has forged over the years.

I asked Larry for his comments on his retirement.

“I began employment with the Texas Board of Private Investigators and Private Security Agencies back in August of 1984. Now over 28 years later I have retired now under the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Yes, there were good times and bad times over the years, and I hope that for the most of you the good times out weigh the bad times when you think of me.

I want thank all of you for your assistance and cooperation over the years. As I move to start the next journey in my life I hope that all of you have a safe and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. (P.S. I ran in to several individuals that I had not contact ed in a while before I retired and they commented that "I thought" & "I heard you were dead." So if you are reading this then we are both still very much alive.)

Again thank you all.”

Larry Shimek Retires from Texas DPS

2014 Training Schedule

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- **Level 1 Class** – This training program, provided by TBFAA is a certified, nationally recognized training program approved by the Texas Private Security Bureau, License #0104. This 16-hour course meets requirements for installers and salespersons. The program provides an overview on the theory, installation and maintenance of alarm systems. Topics include: Burglar Alarm Systems Overview, Sensors, Controls & Communications, Notification Devices, Hold up Alarms, Professionalism & Ethics, Building Construction, Safety, Law, Standards & Codes, General Electricity & Electronics, Microprocessors & Computers, Tools & Fasteners, Testing & Troubleshooting.


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Every Memorial Day for the past three years I sit and remember a young man that made an impact on my life and the lives of all those that knew him.

Spc. Matthew Catlett had a difficult life growing up but was determined to make a better life for himself and his family. He enlisted in the United States Army in 2008 and served his country well until June 2010 when he was killed in Afghanistan. He left behind two beautiful little girls that are reminded often how much he loved them and how he wanted a better life for them.

This year near Memorial Day, I not only remembered Matthew but also my son in law, Spc. Chad Berry who is now serving in Afghanistan. I pray each day that Matthew is watching over him to keep him safe. As I pray for both of these dedicated men, I shared my thoughts with a great friend, Debi Ulmer.

Debi suggested that we make up some care packages and send them over to the soldiers. Debi has in her home, her grandfather’s table which for the past 100 years had been a gathering place for preparing packages for soldiers. Her family had always sent a family member care packages and always added two more for others.

In honor of Matthew’s life and Chad’s service we decided that we should carry on this tradition. We were only going to send a few boxes but then as word got out, we started getting donations from as far away as California.

Members of ASSIST and HGCAA donated not only money but their time in helping prepare these packages for our soldiers.

By July 10th we had received almost $5,000! Needless to say we did not just send just three boxes but were able to send 82 care packages! Each package had approximately $75 of assorted items (i.e. T-shirts, socks, razors, toothbrushes, etc.). All packages were mailed out on July 15th and received by the soldiers on July 28th!

I want to personally thank each member of ASSIST and HGCAA for all that they do for our industry and the community. I know that this tradition will continue and ASSIST and HGCAA will always be there if the need arises.

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Schedule—Subject to change

Friday 10/3/14
• 8:30-9:30am - Breakfast- Speaker

Saturday 10/4/14
8-10am – Breakfast