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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.

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Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association
P.O. Box 22488
Dallas, TX 75222-4848
Phone: 877.908.2322  Fax: 877.908.2522

Transmitter Editor
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Kelly Ryan

For an organization such as the TBFAA to be successful, it must have great people, and those people must be able to act upon the needs of the membership. Lately there has been a lot of talk about enforcement of Occupations Code 1702 as it relates to unlicensed alarm activity. With that in mind, what role should the TBFAA take when it comes to unlicensed activity? More specifically, is there a course of action that the TBFAA should take as to assisting the Private Security Board with enforcement of unlicensed activity, or is there even a problem?

Why do I ask? Simply because the topic of unlicensed alarm installations is brought up to me quite often, and I believe it’s the role of the TBFAA to address the concerns of our membership. It is also worth noting that the term “alarm system” as defined in 1702 still includes camera systems, so by default, installing a camera system in the state of Texas without the proper license is illegal.

Before the TBFAA can act, we need to gather information from our membership. If you would like to express your thoughts on the enforcement of 1702, I ask that you contact your TBFAA regional director or email me. The TBFAA is actively trying to gather data to determine if a problem exists, and if it does, select the right course of action to correct the problem.

Even though we are currently in-between legislative sessions, timing is still critical. Quite simply put, if it is determined that an enforcement issue with 1702 exists, we will need this time to evaluate our options and organize our efforts. If we wait until the next legislative session starts, we will already be too far behind.

The TBFAA is a great organization with members and volunteers all across the state, and the voice of our membership is the determining factor for the direction we should follow. Your participation is essential in guiding the efforts of the TBFAA to work for you and the betterment of our represented industries! If you have not yet joined the TBFAA, I urge you to do so by visiting the TBFAA website at www.tbfaa.org. While on our website, visit the “About TBFAA” section and sign-up for our email news & notices, and be sure to follow us on Twitter @TxBFAA, LinkedIn, and Facebook.
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Dealing With DIY

by: Kelly Ryan  
TBFAA President

For as long as there have been homeowners, there has also been “do-it-yourselfers”. From replacing a leaking pipe to installing a new electrical outlet, or even upgrading a thermostat, homeowners have always had the option of doing their own work, and the alarm industry is not insulated from the DIY market.

That being said, there certainly seems to be a rise in the DIY market as it relates to alarm systems, and this brings up a few topics that need to be discussed.

First off, alarm control panels that are “professionally” installed in Texas are required to be CP-01 certified to help reduce false alarms. The CP-01 standard does not necessarily apply to DIY systems, and a lack of CP-01, combined with an improper installation, will increase false alarms, and lower the overall effectiveness of alarm systems. The lack of standards in both equipment and installation with DIY systems has also been addressed by the False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA), warning municipalities of additional false alarms from sub-standard installations.

There have also been articles about DIY security systems being hacked or defeated throughout social media, and while this might seem like an argument against the DIY, it is actually a threat to the entire alarm industry as it may lower the perception of alarm system effectiveness.

I have talked with several security panel manufacturers and many have prepared letters or statements regarding the DIY hacking, so I encourage you to reach out to your equipment representatives to see if they have addressed the issue so that you may share it with your subscribers.

The DIY market is probably here to stay, so it is necessary to keep your subscribers informed of ways to prevent false alarms and to assure them of the quality of the equipment that you provide. More information on false alarm reduction can be found at the False Alarm Reduction Association website www.faraonline.org.

FARA
False Alarm Reduction Association

Do It Yourself Systems Response Position Paper

Do It Yourself or DIY systems are alarm systems that are installed by the alarm user or consumer. FARA believes that because Do It Yourself systems can be a significant source of false alarms, localities should consider the following:

- Improper selection and/or location of sensors can lead to false alarms.
- Improper selection and/or programming of control equipment can lead to false alarms.
- Improper or insufficient training of alarm users can lead to false alarms.
- Alarm system professionals undergo classroom and on-the-job training to learn how to design, install, and maintain alarm systems to reduce false alarms.
- Alarm system professionals enjoy the support of manufacturers and distributors to help them select appropriate sensors and control equipment to reduce false alarms.
- Consumers, who design, install, and maintain their own alarm systems, do not enjoy the benefits of this training and support.
- Retail stores and/or mail order vendors of Do It Yourself alarm systems rarely offer the alarm user sufficient training on the impact of false alarms and how to avoid them.
- Do It Yourself alarm systems may be monitored by a professional alarm company or may contact the user who then calls in public safety to request a response to the alarm activation.
- Do It Yourself alarm systems have the capability to contact a 911 center directly by dialing 911 or a non-emergency number.

Position

FARA believes that each community has a right to enact whatever false alarm resolution best meets its needs. FARA also believes that Do It Yourself Systems should be considered in your alarm ordinance in the following ways:

- Your ordinance should prohibit a do it yourself alarm system from directly dialing or otherwise contacting public safety.
- Any registration or permitting requirements and fees, or fees and/or response limitations that apply to the user for a professionally installed system should apply to the user with a do it yourself system.
- You should consider requiring an inspection by a professional alarm technician for systems that have too many alarms.
- If the alarm user calls in a dispatch request to public safety based on a do it yourself system and it turns out to be a false alarm, the same fees and/or response limitations that apply to professionally installed systems should apply.
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TBFAA Supports Allied Associations

By Roy A. Horn, TBFAA VP Fire 4-22-16

For those of you that do not know, TBFAA helped co-sponsor a SFPE Houston (Society of Fire Protection Engineers) one-day training seminar at Rice University in Houston, TX on Friday, April 8, 2016. The seminar related to the Significant Changes to NFPA 72 impacting the Code Official, Designer, and Contractor. The class was taught by John R. Swanson, Deputy State Fire Marshal from Lakeville, Minnesota who interacted very well with all participants. There were 73 students registered, all students being directly involved in the fire alarm industry. By working with SFPE, TBFAA helped promote a better understanding and professionalism within the fire alarm industry.

Also, On Wednesday, April 20, TBFAA held its Board of Directors meeting at the Holiday Inn Middle Hotel in Austin, TX. At the same time, FARA (False Alarm Reduction Association, www.faraonline.org ) was having its 20th Annual International Training Symposium. Over FARA’s three-day Symposium, there were information sessions, training, and panels with participants from various areas and other states. Naturally, networking was invaluable. The attendance was very good, and there were participating parties from Arizona, New York, Maryland, and other states. FARA assists governments and public safety agencies in reducing false alarms for jurisdictions in the USA and Canada.

Another good reason I mention the FARA Symposium is because TBFAA works with, and supports FARA and its efforts. This professional relationship helps the entire alarm industry without a doubt. During one of the FARA intermissions, I was approached by a fire department representative from the State of New York. They were attending the Symposium to obtain information relating to the establishment of regulatory ordinances with municipalities, and information they could obtain from the industry on how to resolve alarm problems. Part of that conversation related to residential alarm problems, and one specifically related to maintaining CURRENT data for responding agencies at the premises. In my opinion, this problem equally relates to one and two family residences and commercial establishments for both security and fire alarms.

How many times have you and I heard that the alarm second call list was incorrect and there was no one to contact when the owners were gone, or the business was closed for the day with no valid second call people? Or when a municipality notifies the end user that they need to renew their alarm permit / registration but there is only the renewal cost enclosed? Or, the alarm company has either their automatic bank draft or invoicing system established for their customers with no concern about how correct the response information might be for the government agency? One thing is for sure, time flies by and everything changes with time, so it is easy to let this problem slide by. A couple of neat suggestions to help resolve the problem might be for the municipality to have specific forms to send along with the renewal notice, or have their responding agencies provide information and forms to students to take home to their parents when they have special programs at the school. Or, the alarm companies might provide information in their newsletters to their customers, or enclose education material on keeping their response data current with their invoices.

While TBFAA is a real watch dog for any changes that might affect the alarm industry, TBFAA also interacts with other professional Associations for the betterment of the industry. How can anyone in the alarm industry realistically justify not supporting either TBFAA or FARA for the benefit of the industry? Yet only about 10% of all the licensed dealers in the State of Texas support either?

PS: TBFAA’s yearly convention will be held in Rockwall, TX just east of Dallas, TX this coming October. Check on the dates in this TBFAA Transmitter, and mark your calendars.
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What does it take to uphold the rules and regulations of Texas Private Security Board?

By Debi Ulmer, Private Security Board

Since 2004, I have attended the quarterly meetings in Austin and have had the opportunity to learn how the process works, or so I thought. Before my appointment I would sit in the audience and listen to rules being made and enforced, often thinking I would have made a different decision than the Board based on the limited facts presented. What I did not know was how the Board’s decision was reached. There are several factors considered, based on case histories that average 22 pages per case. These include the legal filings by PSB staff counsel and the ruling of the SOAH judge, State Office of Administrative Hearings.

Let me explain even though Texas Occupations Code 1702 and Texas Administrative Code Chapter 35 are clear they are based on the Texas Occupations Chapter 53. What is Chapter 53 you ask? It is part of the Occupations Code that applies to the occupational licensing decisions made by state agencies. It excludes very few occupations. It requires the agencies consider mitigating circumstances for those who have been denied or had their license revoked. If you want to know what the complete set of rules are Google Texas Occupations Code 53.023, but a few things considered are the person’s age at the time the crime was committed, the amount of time since the crime has occurred, whether it was an isolated event, their personal and work conduct, what have they done to better themselves, whether they served in the military, attended and completed a rehabilitation program, and whether the offense could be considered industry related.

OC 1702 and Chapter 35 are firm in outlining our rules, regulations and laws however Chapter 53 allows for flexibility or second chances. Once the SOAH judge has ruled, the case comes before the Board for a final decision on whether to affirm or deny the SOAH judge’s decision. The Board has to decide if the judge has applied OC1702, Chapters 35 and 53 appropriately or has it been misapplied. We have to take into consideration all the above factors and how this will affect our industry, the person appearing before the Board, and the citizens of Texas. If we disagree with the SOAH judge’s decision we have to state the reason(s) why based on rules and/or laws, something that could defended by counsel at an appeal hearing. In some cases, it is hard not to have empathy and not give someone their livelihood back. It is equally disturbing to restore a license because the law requires it. Either way, it is a hard decision. Those decisions are based on facts, rules, and laws, not emotions. The decision we make is life changing either way, someone either goes back to work or has to find a new career.

I do not take this responsibility lightly nor do my fellow board members. What seems to take only a few hours the month following the calendar quarter are actually days of preparation in reading case files, research, note taking and thought. Which is why the decision sitting at the table is vastly different than it would have been sitting in the audience.
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SentryCon 2016

SentryCon 2016 was held April 27 – 29th in Philadelphia, MS at the Pearl River Resort. 181 independent alarm installers gathered for SentryNet’s 21st Annual Dealer Conference. The conference started with a golf tournament at Deerfield Golf Club. SentryNet saluted 57 companies whom have been monitoring with them for 10 plus years, 9 of which were 25 plus years. 14 Industry leaders hosted classes in three educational tracks. 13 vendor partners exhibited at SentryCon.

National Monitoring Center (NMC) Announces Key Executive Hire

Industry Veteran Kathleen Schraufnagel to become NMC Central Station Manager, Texas

Schraufnagel brings an impressive resume to the NMC Team. She began her career in the security industry with Brink’s Home Security in 1991. During her 20 years with Brink’s, she held a number of positions and eventually became their Industry Relations Liaison. She then joined Monitronics in 2011 where a great deal of her time was spent educating her Dealers on IQ and working on the Central Station Alarm Association (CSAA) ASAP to PSAP program. She is co-chair of the ASAP to PSAP Outreach Committee as well.

For over 20 years, Schraufnagel has been active in many local, state and national security industry associations and has held numerous committee and board positions in each. She is currently the Vice President of the North Texas Alarm Association (NTAA) and Secretary for the National Electronic Security Alliance (NESA) as well as a member of the IQ Board of Directors. Additionally, she sits on the Government Relations, Legislative Coalition, and National Companies Committees for the Electronic Security Association (ESA), and is a member of the Alarm Industry Communications Committee (AICC). She has been a member of the False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA) since 1998 and has served the organization in a variety of positions and committees, including the Board of Directors as the Electronic Security Associate Director. She is also an Essentials of False Alarm Reduction Certified Instructor.

Her proudest achievement was her appointment to a multi-association “Think Tank” formed in the late 1990’s that spent four years researching and implementing new false alarm reduction measures nationwide, including what is now known as Enhanced Call Verification (ECV) along with many elements included in the ANSI SIA CP-01 control panel standard and the CSAA CS-V-01 central station standard. The “Think Tank” eventually evolved into the present-day Security Industry Alarm Coalition (SIAC).

Kathleen has a long history of working closely with law enforcement and other government agencies in regard to creating and revising ordinances and helping to craft security industry licensing and alarm management legislation. She has taught Understanding Alarms classes for police academies and training centers, as well as helping to conduct alarm user schools in conjunction with different law enforcement agencies and the Texas Crime Prevention Association.
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TBFAA President Kelly Ryan taught a Level 1 class in El Paso in April.
Smoke detector-style systems have one central battery that is located in the central control panel, and is changed every four years. The central control panels in homes are typically the home security system. Most home security systems have been designed and approved for residential fire alarm system use. Additionally, the sounder(s), the wiring and the system keypads must also be listed by an approved underwriting organization as a residential life safety device. Unfortunately, these systems are being installed too often by system installers who are neither trained nor licensed to install life safety systems.

Visiting a friend’s new home recently, I observed that the home’s smoke alarms had been replaced with smoke detectors. On the surface, this may seem perfectly fine to the homeowner, and in many cases the builder, the home inspector and the local permitting officials will be entirely unaware of the monumental danger that such a replacement poses when the system is not properly installed.

In my friend’s new home, the security system had only one alarm sounder located in the garage entry hallway. This sounder is the only local alarm present in the home. The problem is, when the smoke detectors are activated, they do not have individual sounders as did the smoke alarms which they replaced. Therefore, all of the alarm noise for the whole home is concentrated in the garage entry hallway. No other sounders were present in the home, and this condition violates the fundamental principle of the life safety system: to wake people up and save their lives! There are methods to make the system legal and effective, such as adding sounders to all the sleeping areas, or using smoke detectors with built-in sounders.

In order to provide a fire alarm system, the installing company must be registered with the State Fire Marshal’s Office. The salesperson who sells the fire alarm system must have a residential fire alarm salesperson license, and a licensed Residential Fire Alarm Superintendent (RAS) or Alarm Planning Superintendent (APS) must create a fire alarm plan, drawing and design for each home.

The installers must also be licensed by the Fire Marshal’s Office as a fire alarm systems installer. Additionally, the residential fire alarm system in the home must have a decal showing it’s listing as a residential fire alarm system, and another decal applied upon installation stating the installing company, license number, and the system designer’s name and license number.

A homeowner may request the life safety records from the installing company, and the installing company must provide it to both the homeowner and the local authority upon request.

These residential fire alarm systems are also required to be inspected by a licensed fire alarm technician every two years. The systems must have a good back-up battery, and the homeowner should be able to silence and reset their smoke detection system. Some homeowners may see a security keypad in their recently purchased home that they don’t wish to activate, but may not be aware that the system is also running the life safety system. Powering down and not using the ‘burglar alarm’ may also put your family at great risk by turning off the smoke detectors!

Monitored fire alarm systems must send a test signal to the monitoring center at least every thirty days, and the monitoring center must notify the homeowner if that signal is not received.

There are significant advantages to having a fire alarm system vs. Smoke alarms, but that advantage comes at the cost of regular maintenance and inspections. Know what type of system is in your home, and ensure that it is in good working order.
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8 Hour -1 day Residential Fire Alarm Technician

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Level 1 Class
This training program, provided by TBFAA is a certified, nationally recognized training program approved by the Texas Department of Public Safety, 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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<td>September</td>
<td>29&amp;30</td>
<td>DFW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>10&amp;11</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>1&amp;2</td>
<td>San Antonio</td>
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