# The Harsh Reality of Home Security Systems & Their Response Times

by Tomasz Borys | Jan 15, 2021 | Blogs, News | 0 comments

Research tells us that about 60% of burglars *will* avoid houses with a security system, and you're 300% more likely to be burglarized if you don't have one.

**But it also means that 40% of thieves don't care** either way...and this statistic continues to grow year over year.

Couple that with the fact that **one American home is burglarized every 9 seconds**, and there's a lot of break-ins and thefts taking place at homes with *and* without security systems in place.

And if you're one of the unfortunate homeowners that has a break-in with a home security system installed, there is a harsh reality that is very unsettling....

## Response Time Makes the Difference

If you believe your security system and monthly fee has bought you an *immediate* response, **you're going to be very disappointed**.

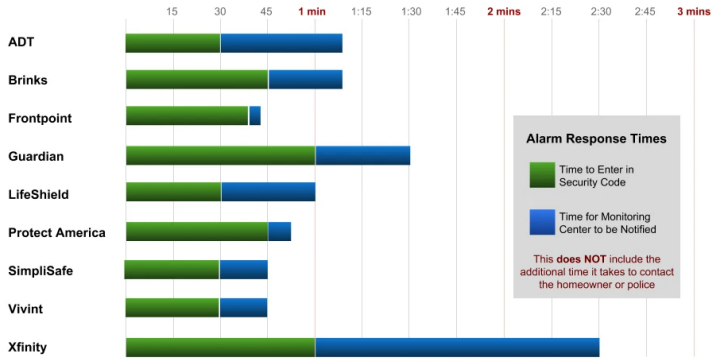
In the event of an attempted burglary, the response time from your security provider is the key differentiator between a successful robbery and a foiled attempt.

You may be surprised to learn that response times can vary wildly from company to company.

And for most, they are measured in minutes.

Response time is actually the combined total for two separate actions: the allowed time in which to enter a code before the alarm goes off, and the time it takes the security provider to be notified that the alarm has been triggered.

It can quickly add up:




With many providers, you can set the delay between entering and an alarm triggering unless you punch in a code. Some, like Brinks, may be up to 45 seconds. ADT ranges from 10-30 seconds, Frontpoint from 30-45 seconds, while Guardian and Xfinity may stretch up to a solid minute. That's how long it takes for the police to respond to an alarm.

These numbers represent the *average*, and several of them allow the homeowner to set the delay at up to 2-3 minutes.

So far, we've only covered half of the response time total. Once an alarm is actually triggered, the service provider next needs to be notified and initiate their response.

According to the collected data, that can easily tack on another 15, 20, 30, 45 seconds, or more depending on a variety of factors like quality of cell reception and/or a wireless vs landline phone system.

So, that could potentially bring us up to 45 seconds, a minute, two and half minutes, or more in total. Each second that goes by feels like a lifetime, especially when a complete stranger has broken into your home.

As all this time that has gone by, the homeowner and/or authorities haven't even been notified yet.

## Typical Protocol

For most providers in the home security industry, the typical response once notified of a triggered alarm is to try and reach the homeowner or primary contact, not once, but two or even three times.

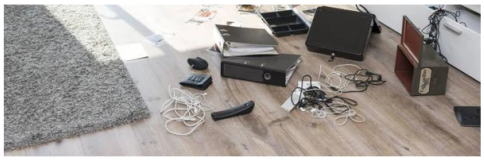
If no contact is made, or contact is made but the homeowners does not know why the alarm is going off, then and only are the proper authorities informed of a possible break-in .

From start to finish, you're looking at an average of eight minutes before the police are notified, plus however long it then takes them to respond (an average of ten minutes according to most sources.)

That's where the traditional system breaks down: most burglars can break-in, take what they want, damage your home, and get out in minutes.

And the police? The harsh reality is, they're probably not coming anyway.

## The Problem for Police



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## The Problem for Police

Here's the harsh reality: anywhere from 90% to 99% of security alarms are false alarms. Forgotten codes, accidental activations, a squirrel on the front porch, a delivery, even a deflating balloon.

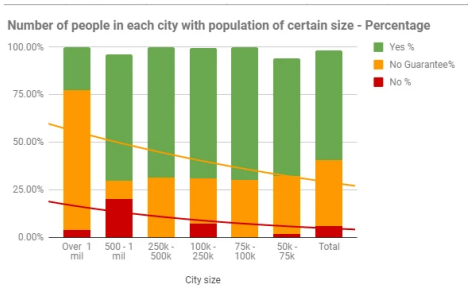
With statistics like that, is it any wonder that the majority of police departments can't or won't prioritize home security alarms?

Police in the United States respond to 36+ million home security alarms every year at a cost of $1.8 billion. Most of them are false alarms, wasting valuable time and money while taking resources away from actual crimes-in-progress

It's unsustainable. Something had to give.

And something did give: authorities have stopped responding.

A recent study by Deep Sentinel found that more than 40% of American citizens living in cities of 50,000 or more have a police department that either does not guarantee a response or categorically won't respond to a residential security alarm.




The situation is even more dire for those in cities with one million or more. **80% of surveyed departments can't guarantee or definitely will not respond.**

Places like San Jose, Detroit, Seattle, Las Vegas, Milwaukee, and San Francisco all have an official no response policy. You can

Places like San Jose, Detroit, Seattle, Las Vegas, Milwaukee, and San Francisco all have an official no-response policy. You can see the policy for your city here.

That said, even departments that *do* respond have to prioritize based on the available information, number of officers on duty, number of concurrent calls, and more.

An activated motion detector or security alarm without additional details is, unfortunately, *not* a high priority or an emergency. They'll respond only after dealing with high priority calls and situations, whenever that is.

False alarms has made security systems virtually worthless during a burglary.

But there is a solution that *does* work.

Enter crime verification.

## Non-verified vs. Verified Crimes

If an alarm goes off and no one can verify why, the data tells us it's likely a false alarm and police treat it as such. It's a non-verified crime. That means a slow response if at all.

However, if the security company can *verify* the a crime is in progress, then police will respond accordingly.

This verification typically requires human eyes on the scene before contacting the authorities. It's been shown to reduce false alarms by 95% while significantly decreasing the average response time.

But sending authorities to the physical location still leaves valuable minutes unattended to that we can't afford to lose.

What is needed is not only a fast and convenient verification to shave minutes off the average response time, but a system that also engages with perpetrators.