



**San Diego County Sheriff**

**Training Bulletin**

**William D. Gore, Sheriff**

**February 2019**



### **False Alarm Reporting 2019 Update**

It is a common call, a radio call to a business or residence because of a burglar alarm. The deputy arrives and handles the alarm as needed. More than likely, it is a false alarm activation caused by a myriad of reasons such as insects, helium balloons, weather, pets, guests, sleepy residents, faulty systems, etc. Sometimes the alarms are valid and a crime investigation begins. This training bulletin addresses false alarms.

False alarms in contract cities are dealt with separately from the unincorporated areas. A False Alarm Response Notice has been developed (**LIC-1**) to assist responding deputies and contract city personnel in determining alarm calls in those areas.

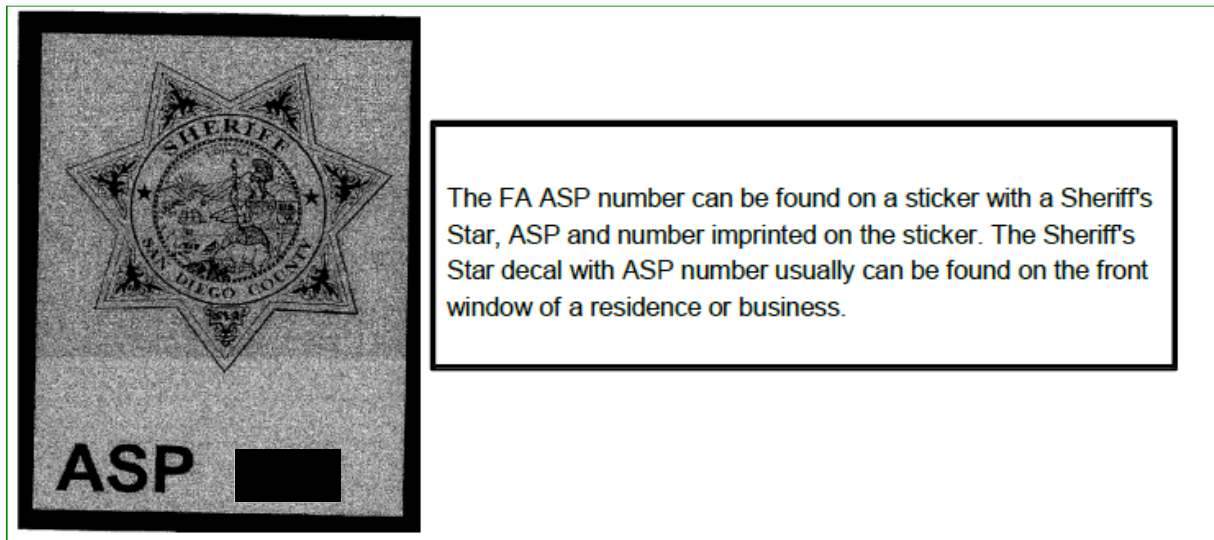
**Our focus for this training bulletin is currently on San Diego County Ordinance 36.501 and related sections.**

The unincorporated areas are tracked through the Sheriff's License Division. The False Alarm Tracking System (FATS) was developed and is supported by a staff that tracks and reviews each and every call. FATS has been active since 1999 and is located on the Sheriff's intranet website (<http://sww.sdsheriff.com/fats>). FATS has four basic query functions which provide various data extractions regarding the alarm subscriber's information, event numbers, etc. as well as the ability to generate reports.

The License Division conducts daily updates of the FATS database and CAD data. With the arrival of the Mobile Data Computers, deputies can assist themselves and the License Division in reducing the amount of false alarm responses. The monetary fine is a strong motivation for persons/businesses to have their alarm systems checked, tuned, or repaired. Alarm users are allowed two "free" responses every six months. Advisement letters are sent out after two false alarms during that six month period.

Additional false activations during that six month period result in penalties starting at \$50.00 and increasing in \$50.00 increments up to a maximum of \$200.00 each. A great deal of administrative effort is placed into the "False Alarm" reduction effort.

There is an appeal process in place and the License Division will investigate each appeal. It is important for the comment section of CAD to contain detailed information on the call so the License Division can review it and make a fair determination. Please take a few seconds to enter the appropriate comments. For alarm calls, there should only be one of three call dispositions: RF (Report to Follow), FA (False Alarm) or FA ASP (False Alarm with an ASP number).



The Licensing Division reviews all calls that are closed as FA. In order to be fair and effective, the CAD comments section should contain detailed information regarding the call to aid in the decision process to determine whether a letter and/or fine will be assessed. For example:

The property was completely fenced and I was unable to physically inspect the building. The building appeared to be secure and I did not observe any suspicious circumstances/activity.

The resident, Jane Doe (birthday and/or DL #) activated the panic alarm after hearing noises outside her bedroom window. A perimeter check was conducted outside the residence, but no one was contacted.

The front door was open and an inspection of the entire residence was conducted. I did not notice anything suspicious and I did not contact anyone. The residence was secured prior to leaving.

I conducted a complete external inspection of the residence and all of the windows and doors were closed and secure. There did not appear to be any evidence of an attempted break-in.

The front door to the residence was obviously forced open and the entire residence appeared ransacked. I contacted the owner and a burglary report was completed.

**IO and OK are not appropriate alarm dispositions.** The FATS program will not be able to retrieve those calls that are given incorrect dispositions.

The information in this Training Bulletin was provided by Donna Burns, Manager of the Sheriff's Licensing Division [REDACTED] and edited for distribution by the In-Service Training Unit. If you have expertise in a particular subject and would like to write a training bulletin, please contact Corporal Brent Longfellow at [REDACTED]