

In an effort to reduce false alarms within the City of Covina, the city updated its alarm ordinance and partnered with PMAM Corporation to implement and administer the Alarm Program, and provide educational training for our citizens. PMAM is a national company with expertise in this area, and will be responsible for our alarm registration, false alarm billing features and share in providing excellent customer service. The first step in implementation is to contact all the installation and monitoring companies operating in Covina and establish a complete list of people who have monitored alarms in the City. Once an alarm customer base is established, PMAM will reach out to each alarm user to assist them in registering their alarm system. A website has been established to assist City of Covina customers [[PMAM Covina Customer Website](#)]

Covina residents and business operators may receive letters from their alarm monitoring companies regarding the updated ordinance, which was revised and modernized to address the increasing number of false alarms resulting from operator and alarm company errors. The goal of the ordinance is to reduce the number of false alarm activations requiring a response by the Covina Police Department, which will free up police resources and reduce the fines levied on alarm customers.

Even the most responsible alarm owners will occasionally cause false alarm activations, approximately once every 18 months, and this ordinance has built-in provisions to ensure one free false alarm response per customer during the permit year upon completion of the free online False Alarm Academy. The False Alarm Academy provides education on false alarms and is designed to reduce recurrences through education.

Alarm monitoring companies may offer alternatives to police department services in response to alarms. Before you act, we encourage all alarm customers to educate themselves on the ordinance, which is Chapter 8.20 of the City of Covina Municipal Code, and is available online. For any questions not answered by reviewing the ordinance, **telephone inquiries can be made at 877-624-4997.**□

[[Municipal Code](#)]

Annual Permits

Annual renewable permits are required for both residential and commercial locations with alarm systems, and annual fees are used to help offset the costs of administering a program. Maintaining a permit allows the Covina Police Department to provide a more timely and effective service to citizens and helps reduce the number of false alarms. It allows responding officers to have a “complete picture” of each location, by providing immediately accessible information, such as the contacts that reside or work at that location, and special characteristics of the location (pets, guard dogs, etc.). The program uses multimedia and other means to educate alarm owners about false alarms and how to prevent them. The Citizen Portal can be used to build and maintain a customized web-based service gateway for each alarm customer, and setup through the [[PMAM Covina Customer Website](#)], where Annual Permit Applications can also be completed.

False Alarms Strain Police Resources

Responding to burglary and robbery alarms are dangerous tasks for police officers. They must always assume the alarm is valid and a crime is in progress. Officers respond to these calls quickly to ensure the public’s safety while anticipating the possibility that they will encounter one or more suspects at the location. In 2012, The Covina Police Department received 1,261 alarm calls of which almost 99% turned out to be false alarms. Responding to false alarms creates a tremendous strain on police resources when officers could be better utilized proactively patrolling and helping residents and visitors in the City of Covina.

The new ordinance is designed to better educate alarm users how to properly maintain and operate their systems, and also hold alarm companies responsible for installing reliable systems and appropriately monitoring them. Other jurisdictions that have similar ordinances have reduced their false alarm responses over 60% within 2 years.

Jody Collins will remain the Covina Police Department alarm program liaison, and can be reached Monday through Thursday between 8am and 11am at (626) 384-5627, or by email at jcollins@covinaca.gov