

Professional Certification Program
Preliminary Exam Objectives
By Topic

1. General Preparation & Definitions
2. Alarm Systems
3. False Alarm Reduction Strategies
4. Program Development
5. Program Implementation
6. Program Evaluation & Reporting

General Preparation & Definitions

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the false alarm problem and the groups that are working on the problem.
 - 1.1. Identify how an understanding of FARA's mission and documentation can help establish and implement a false alarm reduction program.
 - 1.2. Define a false alarm.
 - 1.3. List the major causes of false alarms.
 - 1.4. Cite the prime solutions to false alarms.
 - 1.5. Cite the major impacts of false alarms.

False Alarm Reduction Strategies

2. Describe methods commonly employed to implement alarm management programs, including:
 - 2.1. Implement Existing Ordinance**
 - 2.1.1. Cite the advantages of implementing an existing ordinance to start a program.
 - 2.1.2. Cite the disadvantages of implementing an existing ordinance to start a program.
 - 2.2. Permitting & Registration**
 - 2.2.1. Cite the advantages of requiring permits/registrations.
 - 2.2.2. Cite the disadvantages of requiring permits/registrations.
 - 2.3. Registration Fees**
 - 2.3.1. List the advantages of charging registration fees.
 - 2.3.2. List the disadvantages of charging registration fees.
 - 2.4. Fees or Fines for Abusers**
 - 2.4.1. List key considerations to include in your fine structure to encourage compliance.
 - 2.5. Restricted Response- Internal Suspension Policy**
 - 2.5.1. Define Restricted Response.
 - 2.5.2. List the advantages of suspending response to abusers.
 - 2.5.3. List the disadvantages of suspending response to abusers.
 - 2.6. Verification**
 - 2.6.1. Define verification.
 - 2.6.2. List methods to verify or attempt to verify an alarm.
 - 2.6.3. Describe the impact of verification on false alarms.
 - 2.7. Enhanced Telephonic Verification**
 - 2.7.1. Define Enhanced Call Verification (ECV).
 - 2.7.2. List Enhanced Call Verification (ECV) methods.
 - 2.7.3. Describe the impact of Enhanced Call Verification (ECV) on false alarms.
 - 2.8. Education**
 - 2.8.1. List common methods to educate alarm users and alarm and public safety professionals.
 - 2.8.2. Describe the impact of technician education on false alarm reduction.
 - 2.8.3. Describe the impact of educating public safety professionals on false alarm reduction.
 - 2.8.4. Describe the impact of user education on false alarm reduction.
 - 2.9. Private or Verified Response**
 - 2.9.1. Define verified response.
 - 2.9.2. List the advantages of a verified response policy.
 - 2.9.3. List the disadvantages of verified response policy.

2.10. Public Safety Contact with Abusers

- 2.10.1. Identify the advantages of public safety contact with abusers.
- 2.10.2. Identify the disadvantages of public safety contact with abusers.

2.11. Alarm Company Collection

- 2.11.1. Define alarm company collection.
- 2.11.2. Identify the advantages of alarm company collection.
- 2.11.3. Identify the disadvantages of alarm company collection.

2.12. Outsourcing

- 2.12.1. Define outsourcing.
- 2.12.2. Identify the advantages of outsourcing.
- 2.12.3. Identify the disadvantages of outsourcing.

2.13. Broadcast and File

- 2.13.1. Define broadcast and file.
- 2.13.2. Identify the advantages of broadcast and file.
- 2.13.3. Identify the disadvantages of broadcast and file.

2.14. Alarm Business Licensing

- 2.14.1. List common requirements of alarm companies at a local level.
- 2.14.2. List common requirements of alarm companies at a state or provincial level.
- 2.14.3. Identify the advantages of alarm business licensing.
- 2.14.4. Identify the disadvantages of alarm business licensing.

2.15. Installation/Manufacturing Standards

- 2.15.1. Describe generally accepted standards for the various components of the alarm system.
- 2.15.2. Identify the advantages of installation/manufacturing Standards.
- 2.15.3. Identify the disadvantages of installation/manufacturing Standards.
- 2.15.4. Describe the impact the SIA Control Panel standards can have towards false alarm reduction.

2.16. Criminal Sanctions

- 2.16.1. Describe how criminal sanctions are commonly implemented.
- 2.16.2. Identify the advantages of criminal sanctions.
- 2.16.3. Identify the disadvantages of criminal sanctions.

2.17. Alarm Awareness Schools

- 2.17.1. Describe the objectives of an alarm user awareness school.
- 2.17.2. Describe the desired outcomes of an alarm user awareness school.
- 2.17.3. Describe the advantages of an alarm user awareness school.
- 2.17.4. Describe the disadvantages of an alarm user awareness school.
- 2.17.5. List key steps to implement an alarm user awareness school.

2.18. Soak Period

- 2.18.1. Describe what a "test" or "soak" period is.
- 2.18.2. Identify the advantages of "test" or "soak" period.
- 2.18.3. Identify the disadvantages of "test" or "soak" period.

2.19. Publish Alarm Business Dispatch Rates

- 2.19.1. Identify items to be considered when you implement a program rating the alarm companies in your municipality based on their number of false alarms.
- 2.19.2. Describe the value of rating the alarm companies in your municipality based on their number of false alarms.
- 2.19.3. Describe the disadvantages of rating the alarm companies in your municipality based on their number of false alarms.

2.20. Cancellation

- 2.20.1. Define alarm dispatch cancellation.
- 2.20.2. Describe the advantages of alarm dispatch cancellation.

Alarm Systems

- 3. Demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the alarm industry and alarm technology including ever-changing initiatives and uses/application of technology, including:

3.1. General

- 3.1.1. Identify the objectives of an alarm system.
- 3.1.2. Describe how an alarm system operates.
- 3.1.3. Describe the main components or technologies used in alarm systems and how they are used.
- 3.1.4. Contrast the rate of false alarms for commercial versus residential alarm systems.
- 3.1.5. List common entry/exit errors that lead to false alarms.
- 3.1.6. Identify the difference between the password that identifies an alarm user to their alarm company and a passcode that the user enters on the keypad to arm and disarm the system.

- 3.1.7. List the benefits of dual technology equipment.
- 3.1.8. Identify how Internet Phone or Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) can impact an alarm system.
- 3.1.9. Define acronyms commonly used in the alarm industry (associations/equipment/etc.).
- 3.1.10. Identify how alarm companies can be proactive in customer service.
- 3.1.11. Identify issues alarm systems can have with thunderstorms, lightning and power outages.
- 3.1.12. Identify how battery backup impacts alarm systems.

3.2. User Training

- 3.2.1. Describe what to tell your citizens if they set an alarm off by accident.
- 3.2.2. List the key things an alarm user should be told to do before they activate their alarm system.
- 3.2.3. Describe what consumers should do before leasing or purchasing an alarm system.
- 3.2.4. Describe the value of installation and customer checklists when an alarm system is newly installed.
- 3.2.5. List actions each alarm company should take with all of their customers before activating an alarm system.
- 3.2.6. Identify issues alarms users can have in apartments.
- 3.2.7. Identify issues alarms users can have with pets and rodents.
- 3.2.8. Identify issues alarms users can have with visitors, family, child care givers, domestic help, real estate agents, contractors or other employees.
- 3.2.9. Identify issues alarms users can have during holidays.
- 3.2.10. Identify issues alarms users can have when moving.
- 3.2.11. Identify issues alarms users can have when remodeling.
- 3.2.12. Identify issues alarms users can have when rearranging or moving your furniture or acquiring new items.
- 3.2.13. Identify issues alarms users can have in springtime.
- 3.2.14. Describe why it is important for the alarm user to maintain contact their alarm company.

3.3. Duress, Panic, Etc

- 3.3.1. Distinguish between a duress, panic, robbery and burglar alarm.
- 3.3.2. Cite advantages and disadvantages of duress alarms in a residential setting.
- 3.3.3. Define a 1+ duress signal.
- 3.3.4. Describe how a 1+ duress signal is activated.
- 3.3.5. Describe the propensity for false alarms with a 1+ duress feature.
- 3.3.6. Identify potential problems with single-action panic buttons located on key fobs and pendants.

3.4. Mobile Security

- 3.4.1. Describe what a mobile security alarm is.

3.5. Smoke Emitting Devices

- 3.5.1. Describe what a smoke emitting device is.

Program Development

- 4. Demonstrate extensive knowledge of the principles and techniques of planning, formulating, analyzing and implementing program policies and strategies, to provide for a successful false alarm reduction program, including:

4.1. Research.

- 4.1.1. Describe the common methods to determine your municipality's false alarm problem.
- 4.1.2. List key principles involved in a successful false alarm reduction unit.
- 4.1.3. Demonstrate a thorough knowledge of federal, state and local laws and regulations pertaining to alarm systems, installers and companies, which provide the legal foundation for enforcement of false alarm reduction efforts.
- 4.1.4. List the costs that should be included to calculate the cost per hour of a false alarm response.

4.2. Determine goals.

- 4.2.1. Identify common goals of a false alarm reduction program.

4.3. Obtain support.

- 4.3.1. List key stakeholders to include in the formulation of your program.
- 4.3.2. Identify methods to obtain support from police chief/sheriff/fire chief.
- 4.3.3. Identify methods to obtain support from legislators.

4.4. Develop and pass a false alarm ordinance.

- 4.4.1. List key elements to include in your alarm ordinance.
- 4.4.2. List common challenges to passing an ordinance.
- 4.4.3. List key steps you can take to get your ordinance passed.
- 4.4.4. Describe the consequences of non-compliance that are commonly included in an ordinance.

4.5. Determine necessary personnel, start-up costs and timelines.

- 4.5.1. Outline the most significant tasks performed by a false alarm reduction unit.
- 4.5.2. List items to be considered in determining your total startup costs.
- 4.5.3. List criteria used to determine quantity and type of employees needed.

- 4.5.4. Compare the use of sworn vs. civilian personnel.
- 4.5.5. Identify the impact of provisions of your ordinance on personnel requirements.
- 4.5.6. Describe appropriate staff needed and main job responsibilities.
- 4.5.7. Describe minimum qualifications for various staff.
- 4.5.8. Describe the impact of alarm unit staff education on false alarm reduction.

4.6. Decide on a method for tracking and billing.

- 4.6.1. Identify key data that needs to be collected.
- 4.6.2. List the most common billing periods.
- 4.6.3. List the main functions of false alarm management software.
- 4.6.4. Identify the terms used in false alarm management software.
- 4.6.5. Contrast custom with off-the-shelf alarm management software.
- 4.6.6. Identify the importance of a CAD interface in an alarm management software product.
- 4.6.7. Describe security considerations for alarm management software.
- 4.6.8. Describe how electronic filing of alarm user permits/registration can facilitate the process.
- 4.6.9. Advantages and disadvantages of electronic filing of alarm user permits/registrations.
- 4.6.10. List methods of electronic filing.
- 4.6.11. Identify key parties that need access to electronically filed data.

Program Implementation

5. Demonstrate extensive knowledge of the principles and techniques to implement program policies and strategies, to provide for a successful false alarm reduction program, including:

5.1. General Implementation

- 5.1.1. Identify the steps to follow to implement a false alarm reduction program.
- 5.1.2. Describe considerations used in hiring personnel.
- 5.1.3. Describe key information that should be captured on alarm user permit/registration forms.
- 5.1.4. Identify common correspondence used to support the program.
- 5.1.5. List the various resources available to assist a False Alarm Reduction Unit.

5.2. Communication

- 5.2.1. Demonstrate ability to communicate effectively in writing.
- 5.2.2. Demonstrate skill in presenting information to public and private sector leaders to enhance understanding and compliance with laws and regulations.
- 5.2.3. Demonstrate ability to analyze, interpret and explain laws, regulations, policies and procedures to individuals, groups or agencies in order to gain compliance and/or understanding.
- 5.2.4. Identify common items that are included in information and educational brochures on ordinances.
- 5.2.5. Describe how utilization of FARA bulletins can help alarm users avoid false alarms.
- 5.2.6. Identify the advantages of communication among public safety, alarm industry and alarm user.
- 5.2.7. Describe how holding regional meetings can reduce false alarms.

5.3. Enforce ordinance

- 5.3.1. Describe common methods to encourage compliance.
- 5.3.2. Describe key steps in an appeals process.
- 5.3.3. Describe the value of an appeals process.
- 5.3.4. List common reasons that an appeal by an alarm user may be granted.

Program Evaluation & Reporting

6. Demonstrate extensive knowledge of the principles and techniques of analyzing and evaluating the effectiveness of program policies and strategies, to provide for a successful false alarm reduction program, including:

- 6.1. Identify methods to evaluate the effectiveness of an ordinance.
- 6.2. Identify methods to review and analyze policies and procedures, to develop and implement new and/or revised procedures, to correct deficiencies or to make the program more effective.
- 6.3. Describe methods of statistical analysis to apply resources, determine problematic areas, determine trends, and provide the basis for new initiatives.
- 6.4. Calculate the rate of false alarms for a jurisdiction.
- 6.5. List advantages to creating alarm unit annual reports.
- 6.6. List disadvantages to creating alarm unit annual reports.
- 6.7. List common statistical and other data that should/can be reported.