

Progressive Communications Plan to Address Repeat False Alarms

1. Public Education

Objective

To reduce the frequency of repeat false security alarms through targeted outreach, education, and policy enforcement, thereby preserving valuable policing resources and enhancing public safety.

Target Audience

Primary: County of Brant property owners or managers (residential and commercial).

Key Messaging Themes

1. **Awareness:** Educate on the impact of false alarms on police resources and community safety.
 2. **Responsibility:** Emphasize the role of property owners in maintaining their security systems and minimizing false alarms.
 3. **Solutions:** Provide clear steps to prevent false alarms, including system maintenance, proper usage, and training.
 4. **Accountability:** Communicate consequences of repeat false alarms.
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Phased Approach

Phase 1: Education and Awareness

Goals:

- Build awareness of the issue and its impact.
- Encourage voluntary compliance with best practices.

False Alarms Communications Plan

Tactics:

1. **Direct Communication:** Explaining the issue, its impact, and tips for prevention.
 1. County of Brant Quarterly Newsletter
 2. Dispatch OPP Newsletter
 3. OPP Page on Brant.ca
 2. **Social Media Campaigns:** Share educational posts, infographics, and videos on municipal channels about false alarms and prevention tips – encourage training on alarm system operation.
 1. Graphics
 2. Video about proper alarm usage and learning.
 3. Video about what to do if a false alarm is triggered.
 3. **Media Release:** Quotes from OPP and Emergency & Protective services, and statistics about increase in false alarm instances.
 4. **Connect with Economic Development and Tourism:** Connect with Research & Marketing Economic Development Officer (Brandon Webb) about contacts with businesses and connections – possibly utilizing the new Economic Development and Tourism Bi-monthly newsletter (email).
 5. **Connect with Planning Division** about their connections and engagement with Developers (Brandon Kortleve) and providing information directly to them.
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Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Reduction in the total number of false alarms.
 - Increase in community awareness (measured via survey responses or attendance at workshops).
 - Compliance rate of repeat offenders.
 - Positive feedback from OPP and community members.
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Potential Costs

- Printing – Tip sheet – qty: 1000 - ~\$200.00
- Paid social media – if desired – recommend ~\$500.00 for a month-long campaign
- Newspaper ads - ~\$100.00 - \$500.00

2. Individual Repeat Properties – Response

Target Audience

Primary: County of Brant property owners or managers (residential and commercial) with repeat false alarms.

Step 1: First Instance - Warning Letter and Educational Resource

- **Warning Letter:** Upon the first false alarm, send a formal warning letter explaining the situation. The letter should include:
 - A clear explanation of how false alarms impact police resources and public safety.
 - The County's At-Fault False Alarm Fee Schedule
 - Encourage contacting the alarm company for assistance with alarm system issues.
 - **Educational Resources:** Attach or link to resources such as:
 - False Alarm Tip Sheet
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Step 2: Second Instance – First Fine - \$150

- **Fine Implementation:** Issued a fine (\$150) to signal that repeated false alarms are unacceptable.
 - **Follow-Up Communication:** Along with the fine, send another letter emphasizing the importance of addressing the issue and the consequences of continued false alarms.
 - **Offer Support:** Encourage the property owner to schedule an alarm assessment.
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Step 3: Third Instance – Second Fine \$250 & Community Engagement Officer/County Representative Visit for Engagement

- **Escalated Fine:** Imposed higher fine (\$250) for continued non-compliance.
- **On-Site Visit:** Dispatch a Community Engagement Officer and County employee to visit the property. During the visit:
 - Discuss causes of false alarms and steps to mitigate them.

False Alarms Communications Plan

- Offer practical solutions, such as upgrading outdated systems, adjusting sensitivity settings, or improving user training.
 - Reinforce the potential penalties for further false alarms.
 - **Build Relationships:** Use the visit to foster a collaborative approach, emphasizing education over enforcement.
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Step 4: Fourth Instance - Third Fine \$350

- **Escalated Fine:** Imposed higher fine (\$350) for continued non-compliance.
 - **Formal Notification:** Send a letter outlining the history of false alarms and fees incurred and reminding the offender of the ongoing strain on police resources. Expect a follow-up visit for further false events.
 - **Encourage Training:** Emphasize the importance of knowledge on alarm system management to avoid further penalties.
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Step 5: Fifth Instance and Onward - Significant Fine and Officer Follow-Up

- **Substantial Fine:** Applied larger fine (\$500) to strongly deter future offenses.
- **Second Officer Visit:** Have a Community Engagement Officer & County representative revisit the property to:
 - Reiterate the critical need for compliance and discuss possible restrictions on police response for future false alarms.
- **Formal Notification:** Send a letter outlining the history of false alarms and fees incurred and reminding the offender of the ongoing strain on police resources. Expect a follow-up visit for further false events.