

A Secure Word



by Alarm Monitoring Services, Inc.

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MONITORING

Are You Prepared for Being a Responsible Party?

by Carrie Badour, VP Operations

Responder. Emergency contact. Key holder. Responsible party. Regardless of the title, being called about an alarm system going off is serious business. Having been charged with responding to alarm conditions or to give access to firefighters, policemen, or emergency medical responders is a huge responsibility and shouldn't be taken lightly.



Think of it like being asked to be the maid-of-honor or best man in your dear friend's wedding... without the cute dress you can cut off and wear again. You must make sure you are available around the clock and are willing to drop everything when you are called to help. In this case though, the special day isn't the day vows are exchanged, it is the day you turn up because there are signs of fire, signs of a break in, or a true medical emergency.

Emergency responders are trained to react and make good decisions in the face of an emergency or life-threatening situation. When they are called out for an alarm they look for the cause of the alarm condition, whether it is a fire, break-in, theft, or physical injury. In some cases, they will need to be granted access into the building where the emergency exists. That's the special day when emergency contacts are called into action.

Many people are completely unaware they have been listed as an emergency contact for another person's alarm and are taken by surprise when contacted regarding an emergency at someone else's home or business. Make sure your customers relay important information to their emergency contacts. Subscribers should tell their designated emergency contacts that they have purchased an alarm system and how to use it. They need to be informed that their telephone number has been given to the alarm company and they may be called in the event of an alarm. They should also be prepared to provide the passcode on the account, meet the people assessing the emergency, and silence the alarm.

Adding the central station's caller id to the emergency contact's address book may help save confusion so they recognize the number and, therefore, will be more likely to answer when an operator calls them. It may also be a good idea to provide them with the phone number to call in false alarms or schedule service as these emergency contacts are typically the same people who will check the business/home/pets when the owner is away.

Don't let your subscribers be embarrassed by having the emergency response team break in their door. Educate your subscribers on being responsible end users and making good choices when it comes to selecting emergency contacts for their alarm system. Help them pick someone who will be prepared for the occasion, not 10 minutes late for the ceremony in sweat pants.

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