

Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

www.ci.norfolk.ne.us

April 2, 2013

“Burglary Alarms A Good Deterrent Against Robberies”

They’re popping up in landscaping all across Norfolk- signs advising would-be burglars that the property is protected by an alarm system. Currently there are 208 intrusion alarm permits that have been issued in Norfolk. Do the alarms work? Is the sign and/or the alarm enough to protect a home or business from being burglarized?

Norfolk Police Captain Mike Bauer said any safety measures including locking windows and doors and using motion lights will help prevent a burglary from occurring. An alarm system is another effective deterrent available to property owners.

The Norfolk Police Department currently works with alarm system companies in responding to activated alarms set up with customers they have contracts with. The department also uses its own alarm systems to monitor 23 businesses and homes in Norfolk for a fee of \$275 a year.



Regina Sherman of Homestead Assisted Living in Norfolk works near the Norfolk Fire Department alarm panel at the facility. Rhonda Thompson, executive director at Homestead, said if the alarm is activated, it also goes off at the fire station which provides a quicker response from fire fighters.

There are various types of alarms that include fire, intrusion, life alert, panic and hold up alarms. A fire alarm will send an alert to the fire department while a life alert alarm informs health professionals if a person has fallen or has a health issue. Individuals may choose to wear a panic alarm if they need assistance in the case of the violation of a protection order. Store employees may wear a hold up alarm for quick help if there is a robbery or other emergency situation.

“One business owner may choose to have an intrusion alarm set up that would first alert him and then he decides whether to contact law enforcement or not. Another person may choose to have an alert sent to the alarm company

official who then sends it on to the police. Other alarms are set to directly alert the police department and officers are then immediately sent out. It’s really individualized; however, response time is critical,” Bauer said.

If an intruder sets off a large audible alarm, he is more likely to be scared off and leave the premises without taking any stolen goods with him. Bauer said police officials prefer silent alarms so that the intruder can be apprehended.

“With an activated silent alarm, we can catch the perpetrator in the act. Without that encounter a burglary case may be a hard case to prove and it involves a ton of work. Alarms greatly enhance the chances that we will be on site when the crime is in progress. We do catch burglars,” Bauer said.

There are times that alarms are set off accidentally. A college aged son or daughter may come home unexpectedly or the homeowner may forget to turn the alarm off when he stops at home for lunch. The Norfolk Police Department doesn’t charge an extra fee to a homeowner until the sixth false alarm.

“It takes a minimum of two officers to respond to a call and a false alarm takes time that the officers could be working elsewhere. People with alarms need to know how to activate and de-activate them and they need to keep them in good working order,” Bauer said.

He added that surveillance cameras also serve as deterrents for robberies. Some alarms are set up so that a camera is activated when the alarm goes off to get a picture of the intruder. Various cameras are able to send information directly to the property owner with live footage played on the owner’s smart phone.

“It’s incredible how the number of alarm systems in Norfolk has exploded but a person’s home is their castle. You can’t really put a price on peace of mind,” Bauer said.