

CITY OF OAKLAND



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Date: February 29, 2024
To: Members of the City Council and Members of the Public
From: Councilmember Rebecca Kaplan
Re: **Adopting Verified Response**

Excessive false alarms unduly burden law enforcement, impacting resources. A conventional alarm system can only sense motion and cannot detect criminal intent. It can only report human error, system malfunctions, and unusual conditions, most unrelated to any criminal activity. Verified Response is a proven method of ensuring public safety that has progressed beyond its early stages. Municipalities nationwide have implemented Verified Response to reduce false alarms that trigger a police dispatch.

Cities such as Las Vegas, Nevada, have implemented and reported a significant reduction in false alarms. In the widely lauded report [*Verified Response Really Does Work*](#),¹ nine police departments across the United States endorse Verified Response as an effective tool. The report found, "As more and more cities and police departments face limited resources and budget cuts, a logical area of reduction is unproductive calls for service; that being alarm responses, which are consistently 98 – 99% false." Since adopting Verified Response, the report cited over a decade of success in Las Vegas's reduction of false alarms.

The report's finding echoes various other investigations into false alarms, including the Oakland Police Department, which reported over 8,000 false alarms in 2021 and 2022. Furthermore, the Public Safety and Oversight Committee's (SSOC) DC Bolton, former liaison to the Oakland Police Department, reported that 98% of Oakland's alarm responses were false alarms. Like Las Vegas, Oakland will reduce wasted law enforcement resources by adopting Verified Response.

¹ https://slcpd.com/wp-content/uploads/multiple_cities_endorse_VR.pdf

[In a study conducted by Temple University](#),² researchers examined the effectiveness of Verified Response by studying years of false alarm data from the Salt Lake City Police Department. Like the Oakland Police Department, Temple University researchers found between 94% and 98% of police responses to alarm activations are false alarms. Furthermore, researchers believe solving the crisis of wasted police resources on false alarms could free up the equivalent of \$1.8 billion or 35,000 police officers. Verified Response was adopted in 2000 by Salt Lake City. In the year before adopting Verified Response, the Salt Lake City Police Department responded to over 9,000 false alarms. The year following the adoption of Verified Response, the police department responded to just under 1,000 false alarms. In the second year of adoption, the police responded to just over 800 false alarms. This amounted to a 92% drop in false alarm response. Researchers implemented synthetic models of cities similar in size and need to Sal Lake City and found an 87% reduction in false alarm response if those cities were to adopt Verified Responses.

The City of Oakland should adopt a Verified Response system without delay. Numerous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness and practicality of Verified Response. Police time and resources should be utilized responsibly to ensure public safety. The SSOC has expressed its support for Verified Responses and collaborated with the At-Large office to develop a fair approach to introducing and adopting Verified Responses. To better serve the public, it is crucial to allocate law enforcement resources to efforts that enhance the safety and well-being of Oakland residents and their property. The At-Large office strongly recommends adopting a Verified Response system as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted,



Rebecca Kaplan
Oakland City Councilmember At-Large

² <https://liberalarts.temple.edu/sites/liberalarts/files/False-alarm-paper-international-Rev-of-law-economics.pdf>