Verkada

Understanding AVS-01

The New Alarm Scoring Standard That Could Make Your Alarm System Obsolete

The vast majority of intrusion alarms reported to police in the United States are false. Coupled with unprecedented labor shortages, it's not surprising that many police departments are being more judicious with their limited resources and have started requiring that an alarm is verified before they will respond.

Earlier this year, The Monitoring Association released TMA AVS-01, an alarm verification scoring standard that provides consistent criteria to help emergency services prioritize incidents. While implementing AVS-01 is voluntary, it's already in use by most major central stations across the U.S. and is quickly heading towards universal adoption.

Here's what you need to know about AVS-01, including what it means for your organization's security and how different types of alarm verification could affect police response times.

How does AVS-01 work?

AVS-01 is a framework for alarm monitoring companies to "score" alarm events so that dispatchers and police officers can respond with the appropriate resources and prioritization.

When a monitoring center receives a signal that an alarm system has been tripped, a monitoring agent will look at the available information and assign that alarm a level accordingly. Under AVS-01, all alarms will start at Level 1 and the monitoring agent can escalate or deescalate based on additional information.

Alarm Level 0	The agent will not request emergency dispatch, typically because the alarm was canceled or the agent confirms there is no threat.
Alarm Level 1	The agent receives a signal but has no additional information to determine if there is human presence or if the alarm is legitimate. The agent will request dispatch, but dispatchers will put this at the lowest priority and there may be no police response. This is the score that would typically be given to a traditional intrusion alarm system event, such as a motion sensor going off with no additional context available.
Alarm Level 2	There is proof or high probability - thanks to video, audio, or other data sources - of an intruder on the property, although that person's intent is unknown. The agent will request emergency dispatch and communicate a Level 2 alarm in progress.
Alarm Level 3	Through video, audio, or eyewitness evidence, the agent confirms there is a legitimate threat to property and will request emergency dispatch and communicate a level 3 alarm in progress.
Alarm Level 4	Through video, audio, or eyewitness evidence, the agent confirms there is an imminent threat to a person's life and will request emergency dispatch and communicate a level 4 alarm in progress. Police will be dispatched with the highest prioritization.

What AVS-01 means for your building security

Police departments have been putting alarm verification underlinerequirements in place for years, and AVS-01 is making this practice a nationwide standard. So what does this mean for your organization's security?

Your alarm system must be equipped with real-time verification capabilities if you expect police to respond to a threat to your people or property.

Police departments
that do respond to a non-verified alarm may take 30 minutes or more to arrive. On that timeline, there's almost no chance of preventing damage or catching the intruder in the act.

With the rapid adoption of AVS-01, non-verified alarm systems are increasingly putting businesses at risk for non-response.

The benefits of video-based alarm verification

While AVS-01 permits various kinds of evidence to count toward alarm verification, only real-time video can provide the context needed for agents to score alarms quickly and accurately and escalate to the highest levels if needed. Other types of verification, like audio-based or presence detection, will rarely provide enough information to escalate beyond a Level 2 alarm.

Verkada's Alarm offering includes professional monitoring with built-in video verification.* Customers can choose to use security cameras as alarm triggers using person detection analytics, or pair traditional intrusion sensors with nearby cameras for visual context. This allows monitoring agents to understand the context of all alarm events, regardless of which device triggers the alarm.

Verkada also allows for the easy sharing of live and historical video footage directly with first responders during an alarm. This gives police even more visibility into what is going on, making it more likely that they'll respond quickly and with the appropriate resources.

Conclusion

AVS-01 could be the most significant change to the alarm industry in decades, and your facilities may be at risk as a result. Non-verified alarm systems are unlikely to get you the police response you need, leaving your property more vulnerable than ever before. A video-verified alarm system provides the highest likelihood of having emergency services respond in a timely manner – setting police up for success and giving you the best chance of keeping your people and property safe.

*Video verification available with the LIC-BA Standard Alarm License or the LIC-BV Premium Alarm License.