HGCAA
Houston Gulf Coast Alarm Association

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www.hgcaa.org

President's Message
John C. Helweg

We had a fantastic September meeting. I'd like to thank Amanda at ADI Pinemont for hooking us up with some tasty BBQ for our meeting. It was a nice change. This was my first time in their renovated training space. They've got all the bells and whistles. Please remember, our associate members support us, so please support them.

Our elections went without a hitch. There were no nominations from the floor, so the membership elected the slate of officers as printed. We finally have a full board and I'm excited about our upcoming year.

Our guest speakers with Cornerstone Billing Solutions killed it. They had a great PowerPoint presentation and really showed their knowledge of their product and our industry.

I'm excited to share that we had a very generous offer for the inside cover ad space. This years winner is Tutor Monitoring. The money raised from our ads help support our Association and our First Responders Scholarships.

The guest speaker for our upcoming meeting is ipDatatel. They will speak to us about their recent merger with Resolution, their products, the Helix and the IoT.

Treasurer's Report
Penny Mayorga

Description	Income	Expense	Balance
			$23,984.49
Constant Contact		$47.97	$23,936.52
PAC gift cards		$100.00	$23,836.52
QuickBooks fees		$4.68	$23,831.84
Membership	$375.00		$24,206.84
PayPal fees		$11.24	$24,195.60

Accounts	Balance
Chase Checking	**$24,195.60**
Chase Savings	**closed**
PayPal	**$4,835.00**
Cash	**$180.00**
Undeposited Funds	**$0.00**
COMBINED ACCTS	**$29,210.60**
Accts Receivable	**$4,835.00**
YTD PAC Donations	**$566.00**
Paid Memberships 2017-2018	**49**

Houston Gulf Coast Alarm Association
Minutes of HGCAA Meeting & Luncheon 9/14/2017
Held at ADI Pinemont

Meeting called to order at 11:36

2016-2017 HGCAA Officers / Directors:

President – John Helweg	Membership Director – Mary Edmonson
Vice President – Van Mayorga	Parliamentarian – Calvin Stewart
Secretary – Amanda Jackson	Immediate Past President – Brian McKinney
Treasurer – Penny Mayorga	Associate Director – Jerry Davis
Sergeant at Arms – James Pratt	General / Regional Director – Dennis White

Standard Business:
Benediction / Pledge
Moment of silence in memory of 9/11 and hurricane victims
Roll call of Officers: Established quorum with members present
Recognized associate members in attendance: PGP, ADI, El Dorado
Recognized guests & 1st Responders: HPD & HCSO present
Thanked ADI for hosting/food, Amanda welcomed to newly remodeled branch and pointed out all new customer perks including Customer area with PC/Printer, conference room, training room (available to give CEUs now) and goodies!
Meeting Minutes – reviewed and approved – motion to approve Steve Carr, 2nd'd by Dennis White
Treasurer's Report – reviewed and approved – motion to approve Mary Edmonson, 2nd'd by Mike Moliere

Director's Reports, Committee Reports, & Old/New Business:
- John/President:
  - State of the Association Report, did a lot of good things:
    - Membership almost doubled
    - Camp Hope donations
    - Scholarship Awarded, and winner entered into a state wide additional scholarship opportunity. TBFAA will also do scholarship next year.
    - Joe Carr donation
    - Great line up of speakers
  - Membership wants to continue rotation meeting locations
  - Contracts and AJH forms are on web site under member section
  - Rescheduling Bowling Tournament due to storms, new date TBD
  - Newsletter Ad renewal & inside cover silent bid opportunity
  - Presented Awards for 2017 Board Members and Above & Beyond awarded to Penny Mayorga
- Van/VP:
  - Atlanta suburb now fining alarm companies for end user false alarms. Current PSB rules/statutes do not allow for this in Texas, but we need to keep an eye out for AHJs attempting and educate where needed.
  - Watch out for phishing scams using Fema, insurance companies, contractors, etc. Many members shared their experiences.
- Mary/Membership:
  - Convention 25th-27th at La Torretta Resort on Lake Conroe, about 20 great classes lined up, one of them is "Ask the Attorney"
  - Golf Tournament – let Sonny or Dennis know if you want to play or sponsor a team.
  - Oct. 4th PSB meeting with rule changes – Mary, John and Calvin plan on attending
- Tina/El Dorado: Texas Mutual offer to get up and going after the storm, contact office for details.
- Penny/Treasurer: Need committee for annual financial audit: Mike, Kelly, Henry on committee.

- 2018 Board Nominations / Votes:
  - No nominations from floor, slate stands as published in Newsletter as follows:
    - President: John Helweg
    - Vice President: Van Mayorga
    - Secretary: Mary Edmonson
    - Treasurer: Penny Mayorga
    - Sgt-at-Arms: Amanda Jackson
    - Parliamentarian: Calvin Stewart
    - Membership Director: Dennis White
    - Education Director: James Weston
    - Editor: Steve Carr
    - *Dennis White nominated to remain our vote for TBFAA Region III Director
    - *Immediate Past President: Brian McKinney
    - *Van Mayorga to sit as HGCAA Liaison to TBFFA with John's appointment to VP of Fire
  - Motion to accept Slate above by Steve Carr 2nd by Dennis White, approved by attending members.

Guest Speaker: Scott MacDougal from Cornerstone Billing, specializing in alarm system billing.
- Comes highly recommended by several members who are already using them.
- Your software should increase revenue, save time, and save money… if not; you don't have the right one for you.
- Some key points of their software:
  - Auto populate certificates
  - Has fields for contract/contact info
  - Can send private label marketing with mailed or emailed invoices
  - Works from quote, to sale, to schedule (by tech skill), to install, to receivables and collections if needed.
  - Text messaging for invoices/aging – has 98% open rate.
  - Inventory management with capability of kits.
  - Data matching capabilities with several monitoring stations.
  - Can do company divisions and categories.
  - Roll-up billing for customers with multiple locations (builders, etc.)
  - THEY DO THE WORK TOO… NOT JUST SOFTWARE!

Raffles: Larger prize first except the PAC Fund:
- $25 Home Depot (HGCAA) – Calvin Stewart
- $25 Fandango (HGCAA) – Kelly Ryan
- $25 Amazon (HGCAA) – Charles Olivas
- $25 Pappas (HGCAA) – Rick Strickland
- $25 Academy (UCC) – Mary Edmonson
- $25 Chili's (PGP) – Vin Kurelaitis
- $20 Cash (Affiliated) – Dennis White
- $25 Cash (El Dorado) – Penny Mayorga
- Tool Pouch (ADI) – Penny Mayorga
- PAC $105 – 50/50 $52/53 to Tina Reiser, accepted

Meeting Adjourned 1:31   Next meeting is October 12, 2017 at Tri-Ed

Membership Director's Report
Dennis White

I have been in the alarm business for over 16 years. I started at Counterforce doing sales and acquisitions and migrated over to running the retail dealer program in 2007. I worked for Counterforce for 7 years before coming to United Central Control in 2009.

Prior to joining the alarm industry, I was in the automotive aftermarket as a manufacturers rep covering Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. I was raised in the Rio Grande Valley, and attended Southwest Texas University in San Marcos. I have been at UCC for 8 years as a regional sales manager covering over 16 states and Puerto Rico.

I started in the fire alarm industry in 1993 while still on active duty stationed at NAS Fallon NV. I began my career with a small company called Nevada Fire in Reno, NV. There I learned the basics of fire alarm systems. When I was Discharged from the Navy in 1996 I went to work for Lefebure in San Jose Ca.

LeFebure which was one of the three major companies focused on the banking industry at that time. I was focused on commercial security and fire systems. Honeywell HBS recruited me and I worked for them for 7 years before moving back to Texas. I have earned my NICET III in fire alarm systems in 2007 and my MBA-in finance from UofH- Victoria in 2013. I have held numerous positions in the industry from service technician to Divisional Manager.

I have experienced a lot of changes within the industry and understand that training is a key factor keeping current and ahead of the competition.

Newsletter Advertising

We are renewing ad spaces for 2017-2018.

The ad spots are $300/yr. The ads will move around as content dictates.

Ads are 5" wide x 7" tall and may be updated monthly.

The revenue generated by our Newsletter helps support our Association, Scholarships and our Industry.

Bass Computers, Inc

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DPS
Private Security Update

The Office of the Governor has temporarily suspended "those portions of Chapter 1702 of the Texas Occupations Code and Title 37, Chapter 35 of the Texas Administrative Code necessary for the Texas Department of Public Safety to allow private security personnel licensed and in good standing in another U.S. state to perform private security duties in Texas."

Accordingly the Department of Public Safety will refrain from enforcing the Private Security Act provisions and related administrative rules requiring a Texas-issued license for those seeking to provide the services of a private security guard company, with the following stipulations:

- The private security service provider must be licensed to provide security guard services in another state and must provide the Department with a copy of the license and proof the company license is in good standing, and must complete and submit the Department's application, Form PSB-01. See below for further instructions.

- The private security service provider must provide proof of general liability insurance, as required by Texas Occupations Code §1702.125, with the minimum limits of $100,000 for each occurrence for bodily injury and property damage, $50,000 for each occurrence for personal injury, and a total aggregate amount of $200,000 for all occurrences.

- All individuals who will be providing services as private security officers must be employed by a company meeting the above requirements, and must be registered or licensed in the state in which the employing company is licensed.

- Only a security officer currently commissioned in another state may perform duties as an armed security officer in Texas under this exemption. The security officer must submit documentation from the licensing agency of the particular state establishing the individual has passed a state and federal criminal history background check and is not federally disqualified from possessing a firearm.

The suspension of statutes and rules is in effect until terminated by the Office of the Governor or until the Tropical Depression Harvey disaster declaration is lifted or expires. Payment of fees is waived during this period. Copy of an existing license, proof of good standing and proof of minimum insurance shall be submitted on a PSB-01 form which can be downloaded from the DPS website located at http://www.dps.texas.gov/rsd/psb/forms/ and sent by email to RSD_LRS_PSP2@dps.texas.gov.

To search for an existing private security company in your local area, please utilize the Texas DPS Private Security licensing website located at https://tops.portal.texas.gov/. Please contact the Texas DPS Private Security Program at 512-424-7293 if you have any questions or need additional information.

Calendar of Events

HGCAA meetings are held the second Thursday of each month from 11:30-1pm. See below for the locations.
Dates and locations may change as needed.

October 2017
10/4 - Private Security Board meeting, Austin, TX
10/12 - HGCAA meeting @ Tri-Ed Pinemont
10/26-28 - TBFAA Convention @ La Torretta Resort on Lake Conroe
10/27 - TBFAA Board meeting - Lake Conroe, TX

November 2017
11/9 - HGCAA meeting @ Bass Computers

December 2017
12/5-8 - NICET 1&2 and 3&4 @ ADI Pinemont
12/14 - HGCAA meeting @ ADI Pinemont
12/14 - TBFAA Board meeting - Houston, TX

January 2018
1/11 - HGCAA meeting @ Electronic Custom Distributors

February 2018
2/8 - HGCAA meeting @ Tri-Ed North

March 2018
3/8 - HGCAA meeting @ Automated Outlet

April 2018
4/12 - HGCAA meeting @ Bass Computers

May 2018
5/4 - Bass Computers - Expo & Crawfish boil
5/10 - HGCAA meeting @ Tri-Ed North

June 2018
6/14 - HGCAA meeting @ ADI Pinemont

July 2018
7/12 - HGCAA meeting @ Electronic Custom Distributors

August 2018
8/9 - HGCAA meeting @ Automated Outlet

September 2018
9/13 - HGCAA meeting & elections @ Tri-Ed North

**PLEASE THANK OUR ASSOCIATE MEMBERS
FOR PROVIDING FOOD AND
HOSTING OUR MEETINGS
BY PURCHASING THEIR PRODUCTS**

PROFESSIONAL GUARD & PATROL, INC.

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Vice President of Operations

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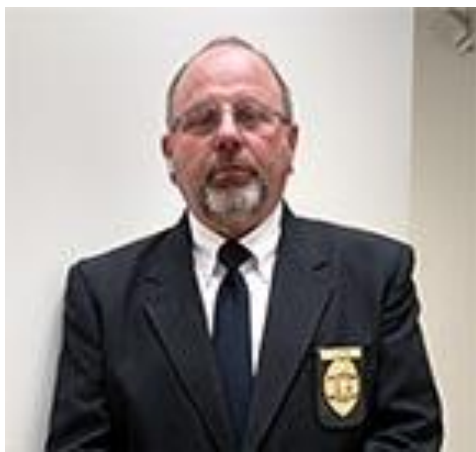Fax: 281.448.2191
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(24-Hour Dispatch)

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SERVICES

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281.448.4900

Hurricane Harvey Recovery Resources

[Texas Hurricane Center](#)

If your employees are facing lost time and will not receive compensation for hours missed during the Hurricane and subsequent flooding, we encourage you to direct them to the Texas Workforce for Disaster Unemployment Benefits Assistance.

[Apply for the Disaster Unemployment Benefits Assistance](#)

These unemployment benefits are specifically designated for Disaster Relief!

For assistance with temporary housing, emergency home repairs, uninsured and underinsured personal property losses and medical and dental expenses caused by the disaster, along with other serious disaster-related expenses, individuals should contact [FEMA](#).

SBA: [Top Five Steps to Your Hurricane Harvey Recovery](#)

TWC: [Hurricane Harvey Disaster Aid Available in 18 Texas Counties](#)

TAB: [Hurricane Harvey Relief Efforts](#)

[SBA to Open Business Recovery Center in Houston to Help Businesses Impacted by Hurricane Harvey](#)

US SBA: [Disaster Assistance](#)

Texas Comptroller's office is committed to facilitating the recovery efforts and assisting in any way possible. Our website is full of helpful information for you. For questions on hotel tax, sales tax and motor fuels tax as they relate to this natural disaster, please visit https://comptroller.texas.gov/ and click on "Harvey" for details.

Texas Taxes and Hurricane Harvey

If you are in the following Texas Counties you may be able to request extensions for certain tax returns:

Aransas, Austin, Bastrop, Bee, Brazoria, Calhoun, Chambers, Colorado, DeWitt, Fayette, Fort Bend, Galveston, Goliad, Gonzales, Hardin, Harris, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Karnes, Kleberg, Lavaca, Lee, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Newton, Nueces, Orange, Polk, Refugio, Sabine, San Jacinto, San Patricio, Tyler, Victoria, Walker, Waller, Wharton

The extensions apply only to returns due on or after the date of the disaster. Don't expect relief for any returns that were already past due.

Franchise Tax Returns that were extended and would have originally had a due date of November 15, can now be extended until January 5, 2018. If you are located in one of the above counties you do not have to ask for an extension. If you are not in this area, but your service provider (the people who prepare your returns) is, they should request the extension for you.

For monthly sales tax returns due on September 20, and quarterly returns due on October 20, the due dates have been extended for 30 days.

Taxpayers who need longer extensions may request them from the Comptroller.

If you are a Hurricane Harvey rescuer, you do not have to pay hotel tax.

You may be able to get an exemption from charging sales tax on labor charges to repair property damaged in the disaster area. The rules are complex so consult your tax professional. HGCAA members can call us for a no charge explanation.

Sales tax is not due on items purchased using FEMA or Red Cross debit cards. Be sure to keep a copy of the receipt and clearly mark it FEMA or Red Cross, and have the purchaser sign it.

If you are an HGCAA member, please feel free to call me with any questions.

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Federal Taxes and Hurricane Harvey

Victims of Hurricane Harvey may qualify for tax relief from the Internal Revenue Service.

The President has declared that a major disaster exists in the State of Texas and businesses and individuals will receive tax relief.

The declaration permits the IRS to postpone certain deadlines for taxpayers who reside or have a business in the disaster area. For instance, taxpayers certain deadlines falling after August 23, 2017 and before Jan. 31, 2018, are granted additional time to file through Jan. 31, 2018. This includes taxpayers who had a valid extension to file 2016 tax returns, quarterly estimated income tax payments originally due on Sept. 15, 2017 and Jan. 16, 2018, and the quarterly payroll and excise tax returns normally due on Oct. 31, 2017. In addition, penalties on payroll and excise tax deposits due on or after Aug. 23, 2017 may be abated. Check with your tax advisor or the IRS for more details.

If an affected taxpayer receives a late filing or late payment penalty notice from the IRS that has an original or extended filing, payment or deposit due date that falls within the postponement period, the taxpayer should call the telephone number on the notice to ask the IRS to abate the penalty.

The IRS automatically identifies taxpayers located in covered disaster areas and applies automatic filing and payment relief. But affected taxpayers who reside or have a business located outside the covered disaster area must call the IRS disaster hotline at 866-562-5227 to request this tax relief.

Covered Disaster Area

It is important to note that only counties in a covered disaster area for purposes of Treas. Reg. § 301.7508A-1(d)(2) and are entitled to the relief detailed below. Taxpayers not in the covered disaster area, but whose records necessary to meet a deadline listed in Treas. Reg. § 301.7508A-1(c) are in the covered disaster area, are also entitled to relief. In addition, all relief workers affiliated with a recognized government or philanthropic organization assisting in the relief activities in the covered disaster area and any individual visiting the covered disaster area who was killed or injured as a result of the disaster are entitled to relief.

Grant of Relief

Under section 7508A, the IRS gives affected taxpayers until Jan. 31, 2018, to file most tax returns (including individual, corporate, and estate and trust income tax returns; partnership returns, S corporation returns, and trust returns; estate, gift, and generation-skipping transfer tax returns; and employment and certain excise tax returns), that have either an original or extended due date occurring on or after Aug. 23, 2017, and before Jan. 31, 2018. Affected taxpayers that have an estimated income tax payment originally due on or after Aug. 23, 2017, and before Jan. 31, 2018, will not be subject to penalties for failure to pay estimated tax installments as long as such payments are paid on or before Jan. 31, 2018. The IRS also gives affected taxpayers until Jan. 31, 2018 to perform other time-sensitive actions described in Treas. Reg. § 301.7508A-1(c)(1) and Rev. Proc. 2007-56, 2007-34 I.R.B. 388 (Aug. 20, 2007), that are due to be performed on or after Aug. 23, 2017, and before Jan. 31, 2018.

This relief also includes the filing of Form 5500 series returns, (that were required to be filed on or after Aug. 23, 2017, and before Jan. 31, 2018, in the manner described in section 8 of Rev. Proc. 2007-56. The relief described in section 17 of Rev. Proc. 2007-56, pertaining to like-kind exchanges of property, also applies to certain taxpayers who are not otherwise affected taxpayers and may include acts required to be performed before or after the period above.

Affected taxpayers who are contacted by the IRS on a collection or examination matter should explain how the disaster impacts them so that the IRS can provide appropriate consideration to their case.

If you are an HGCAA member, please feel free to call me with any questions.

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Texas Mutual and Hurricane Harvey

The devastation caused by Hurricane Harvey in Houston and along the gulf coast of Texas has been unprecedented. It has been a heartbreaking ordeal for all of us, and we realize that many of you – our policyholders' businesses – have been among the hardest hit. That's why we are so pleased to share the news that Texas Mutual is pledging $10 million in relief grants for policyholders!

How and when to apply

Grant applications will open TODAY, September 13 at noon, and funds will be offered on a first come, first serve basis. Current policyholders who have sustained significant damage to a business location in one of the 58 counties on the [governor's Hurricane Harvey Disaster Declaration](#) can apply for up to $10,000 in grant funds from Texas Mutual. Policyholders must have had an in-force policy effective September 12, 2017 or earlier. Funds can be used for payroll, building rehab or repair, machinery and equipment repair or purchase, replacement of lost inventory, and other expenses associated with rebuilding.

To apply for a grant, click the link provided to you in the email from Texas Mutual that you will receive today, or you can visit texasmutual.com/txmfortexas to start your grant application. You can also find information about available additional grants on that page.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us. You might also find this [FAQ](#) document to be helpful.

We're proud to partner with Texas Mutual during this time of extraordinary need, and are thankful to be part of our proud region's recovery.

Sincerely,
The staff at El Dorado
3673 Westcenter Dr. • Houston, TX 77042
713.521.9251 • Fax 713.521.0125
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specialist@eldoradoinsurance.com

AlarmNet Generated Messages Will Soon Change to Contact ID Format

AlarmNet will soon be incorporating changes to enhance how alarm messages are generated from our data center. This is being done to help ensure that our Cloud service solutions continuously deliver best-in-class customer service.

Currently, AlarmNet generated messages are sent to the central station in ADEMCO High-Speed format. **As of October 3, 2017, AlarmNet will send all communication failure and registration messages in Contact ID format.**

These newly created Contact ID messages, outlined in the table below, must be added to the automation software for your AlarmNet accounts on or before October 3, 2017.

Please Note:
The change to Contact ID format will also take effect for devices already reported in communication failure. Future reminder and restoral messages will be sent in the new format.

If you have any questions, please call AlarmNet support at 800-323-4576, select options 2, 1, 1, 9.

AlarmNet Generated Message	Current Ademco High Speed Message	New Ademco Contact ID Message
Communications Failure	5555 1555 6	E359 00 950
Communications Failure Reminder	5555 6555 6	P359 00 950
Communications Failure Restoral	5555 3555 6	R359 00 950
New Registration	No signal code sent currently	E360 00 0000
Authorized Substitution Registration	00D0 010C 0	E361 00 0000
Unauthorized Substitution Registration	00D0 010E 0	E362 00 0000

Dahua, Hikvision IoT Devices Under Siege

Dahua, the world's second-largest maker of "Internet of Things" devices like security cameras and digital video recorders (DVRs), has shipped a software update that closes a gaping security hole in a broad swath of its products. The vulnerability allows anyone to bypass the login process for these devices and gain remote, direct control over vulnerable systems. Adding urgency to the situation, there is now code available online that allows anyone to exploit this bug and commandeer a large number of IoT devices.

On March 5, a security researcher named **Bashis** posted to the Full Disclosure security mailing list exploit code for an embarrassingly simple flaw in the way many Dahua security cameras and DVRs handle authentication. These devices are designed to be controlled by a local Web server that is accessible via a Web browser.

That server requires the user to enter a username and password, but Bashis found he could force all affected devices to cough up their usernames and a simple hashed value of the password. Armed with this information, he could effectively "pass the hash" and the corresponding username right back to the Web server and be admitted access to the device settings page. From there, he could add users and install or modify the device's software. From Full Disclosure:

> "This is so simple as:
> 1. Remotely download the full user database with all credentials and permissions
> 2. Choose whatever admin user, copy the login names and password hashes
> 3. Use them as source to remotely login to the Dahua devices

> "This is like a damn Hollywood hack, click on one button and you are in…"

Bashis said he was so appalled at the discovery that he labeled it an apparent "backdoor" — an undocumented means of accessing an electronic device that often only the vendor knows about. Enraged, Bashis decided to publish his exploit code without first notifying Dahua. Later, Bashis said he changed his mind after being contacted by the company and agreed to remove his code from the online posting.

Unfortunately, that ship may have already sailed. Bashis's exploit code already has been copied in several other places online as of this publication.

Asked why he took down his exploit code, Bashis said in an interview with KrebsOnSecurity that "The hack is too simple, way too simple, and now I want Dahua's users to get patched firmware's before they will be victims to some botnet."

In an advisory published March 6, Dahua said it has identified nearly a dozen of its products that are vulnerable, and that further review may reveal additional models also have this flaw. The company is urging users to [download and install the newest firmware updates](#) as soon as possible. Here are the models known to be affected so far:

DH-IPC-HDW23A0RN-ZS, DH-IPC-HDBW23A0RN-ZS, DH-IPC-HDBW13A0SN, DH-IPC-HDW13A0SN, DH-IPC-HFW13A0SN-W, DH-IPC-HDBW13A0SN, DH-IPC-HDW13A0SN, DH-IPC-HFW13A0SN-W, DHI-HCVR51A04HE-S3, DHI-HCVR51A08HE-S3, DHI-HCVR58A32S-S2

It's not clear exactly how many devices worldwide may be vulnerable. Bashis says that's a difficult question to answer, but that he "wouldn't be surprised if 95 percent of Dahua's product line has the same problem," he said. "And also possible their OEM clones."

Dahua has not yet responded to my questions or request for comment. I'll update this post if things change on that front.

This is the second time in a week that a major Chinese IoT firm has urgently warned its customers to update the firmware on their devices. For weeks, experts have been warning that there are signs of attackers exploiting an unknown backdoor or equally serious vulnerability in cameras and DVR devices made by IoT giant **Hikvision**.

Writing for video surveillance publication **IPVM, Brian Karas** [reported on March 2](#) that he was hearing from multiple Hikvision security camera and DVR users who suddenly were locked out of their devices and had new "system" user accounts added without their permission.

Karas said the devices in question all were set up to be remotely accessible over the Internet, and were running with the default credentials (12345). Karas noted that there don't appear to be any Hikvision devices sought out by the [Mirai worm](#) — the [now open-source malware](#) that is being used to enslave IoT devices in a botnet for launching crippling online attacks (in contrast, Dahua's products are [hugely represented in the list of systems being sought out by the Mirai worm](#).)

In addition, a programmer who has long written and distributed custom firmware for Hikvision devices claims he's found a backdoor in "many popular Hikvision products that makes it possible to gain full admin access to the device," [wrote](#) the user "Montecrypto" on the IoT

forum **IPcamtalk** on Mar. 5. "Hikvision gets two weeks to come forward, acknowledge, and explain why the backdoor is there and when it is going to be removed. I sent them an email. If nothing changes, I will publish all details on March 20th, along with the firmware that disables the backdoor." According to IPVM's Karas, Hikvision has not acknowledged an unpatched backdoor or any other equivalent weakness in its product. But on Mar. 2, the company issued a reminder to its integrator partners about the need to be updated to the latest firmware.

"Hikvision has determined that there is a scripted application specifically targeting Hikvision NVRs and DVRs that meet the following conditions: they have not been updated to the latest firmware; they are set to the default port, default user name, and default password," the company's statement reads. "Hikvision has required secure activation since May of 2015, making it impossible for our integrator partners to install equipment with default settings. However, it was possible, before that date, for integrators to install NVRs and DVRs with default settings. Hikvision strongly recommends that our dealer base review the security levels of equipment installed prior to June 2015 to ensure the use of complex passwords and upgraded firmware to best protect their customers."

ANALYSIS

I don't agree with Bashis's conclusion that the Dahua flaw was intentional; It appears that the makers of these products simply did not invest much energy, time or money in building security into the software. Rather, security is clearly an afterthought that is bolted on afterwards with these devices, which is why nobody should trust them.

The truth is that the software that runs on a whole mess of these security cameras and DVRs is very poorly written, and probably full of more security holes just like the flaw

Dahua users are dealing with right now. To hope or wish otherwise given what we know about the history of these cheap electronic devices seems sheer folly.

In December, KrebsOnSecurity warned that many Sony security cameras contained a backdoor that can only be erased by updating the firmware on the devices.

Some security experts maintain that these types of flaws can't be easily exploited when the IoT device in question is behind a firewall. But that advice just doesn't hold water for today's IoT cameras and DVRs. For one thing, a great many security cameras and other IoT devices will punch a hole in your firewall straight away without your permission, using a technology called Universal Plug-and-Play (UPnP).

In other cases, IoT products are incorporating peer-to-peer (P2P) technology that cannot be turned off and exposes users to even greater threats. In that same December 2016 story referenced above, I cited research from security firm **Cybereason**, which found at least two previously unknown security flaws in dozens of IP camera families that are white-labeled under a number of different brands (and some without brands at all).

"Cybereason's team found that they could easily exploit these devices even if they were set up behind a firewall," that story noted. "That's because all of these cameras ship with a factory-default peer-to-peer (P2P) communications capability that enables remote 'cloud' access to the devices via the manufacturer's Web site — provided a customer visits the site and provides the unique camera ID stamped on the bottom of the devices."

The story continued:

"Although it may seem that attackers would need physical access to the vulnerable devices in order to derive those

unique camera IDs, Cybereason's principal security researcher **Amit Serper** said the company figured out a simple way to enumerate all possible camera IDs using the manufacturer's Web site."

My advice? Avoid the P2P models like the plague. If you have security cameras or DVR devices that are connected to the Internet, make sure they are up to date with the latest firmware. Beyond that, consider completely blocking external network access to the devices and enabling a VPN if you truly need remote access to them.

Howtogeek.com has a decent tutorial on setting up your own VPN to enable remote access to your home or business network; on picking a decent router that supports VPNs; and installing custom firmware like DD-WRT on the router if available (because, as we can see, stock firmware usually is some horribly insecure and shoddy stuff).

If you're curious about an IoT device you purchased and what it might do after you connect it to a network, the information is there if you know how and where to look. This Lifehacker post walks through some of the basic software tools and steps that even a novice can follow to learn more about what's going on across a local network.

SOURCE: Krebs On Security - https://krebsonsecurity.com/2017/03/dahua-hikvision-iot-devices-under-siege/
By Admin, March 17, 2017

The New Alarm.com Customer Website is Almost Here

The new Customer Website is going live on October 30, 2017. With this update, you'll continue to be able to offer the most advanced services, but with a streamlined, easier-to-use website experience.

Check It Out Now!
Log in to Alarm.com using Login: emberdemo with Password: Demo123 to see what's changing. Click on the "?" in the top right corner of the screen to launch a website tour. Also, check out our new Website Fundamentals online course on the Alarm.com Academy Online to learn more about the new website.

Key new features include:
- Centralized summary of activity and devices right from the homepage
- Card-based UI (like the mobile app) enables quick control and status checks
- Simplified navigation helps to highlight key tasks like Automation and Notifications

For your new customers, a new Getting Started Guide and video are now available on the Sales & Marketing Portal. Log in to co-brand yours now.

For questions, please contact DealerMarketing@alarm.com

AutomatedOutlet.com

Automated Outlet Houston has moved to:
6300 Westpark Dr, Suite 100
Houston, TX 77057

Our new store is conveniently located right off Westpark Drive at 14th street. That's just half a mile from our previous location!

Thank you for being a loyal customer!

Houston Alarm Detail

Check with the [City of Houston to make sure your company is listed on their alarm permit web site](). They have a specific form you need to fill out and submit to them for inclusion.

You also need to be [sending municipalities notice of alarm system activation]().

Please make sure your customers are using the most [current alarm permit form]().

Harris County Alarm Detail

Please make sure your customers are using the most [current alarm permit form]().

Ft Bend County Alarm Detail

More info to come.

Montgomery County Alarm Detail

Check with the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office to make sure your company is listed on their alarm permit web site.

Please make sure your customers are using the most [current alarm permit form.](current%20alarm%20permit%20form.)

[Alarm ordinance](Alarm%20ordinance) - Montgomery County are actively ticketing homeowners that don't have alarm permits.

Steven Carr has been been in the Security industry since 1989. Initially a systems sales engineer for a Houston based firm, he was recruited by ADT and worked as the Systems Lead and then Commercial Installation Manager of North Texas and South Texas/ Houston regions.

After having retired in 2000, Steven returned to the Security industry in 2015 as Sales and Marketing Manager for OnDuty Systems.

Steven has 5 adult children, 8 grand children and a great-granddaughter. He and his wife live in League City, Texas.

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