



THE PLAIN DEALER

Hacker illegally activates Brunswick emergency sirens

Callback system calms fears; police search for suspect

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Plain Dealer Reporter

Brunswick -- A hacker armed with radio codes set off emergency sirens in Brunswick early Wednesday. If the blasts didn't wake the city's 35,000 residents, follow-up phone calls to residences probably did the trick.

Police were unable to override the hacker's radio tones and had to turn off each of the six sirens by hand. The noise, which began at 12:44 a.m., went on for about 20 minutes.

It was the second night this year the sirens were illegally activated.

The battery-operated devices were turned on twice March 27, prompting more than 1,000 calls to police after 1 a.m. The barrage of calls knocked out the department's phone system.

In response to the March incidents, a notification system called CodeRED was installed in city offices. It was used Wednesday morning to call 13,000 Brunswick telephones to inform residents that the blaring sirens were not signaling an emergency.

No arrests have been made. Police said they interviewed several people of interest in March. Brunswick is offering a \$5,000 reward for help in the arrest of those responsible.

City Manager Robert Zienkowski said once the sirens were turned off Wednesday, the warning system was unavailable in case of a real emergency.

Police Lt. Brian Ohlin said the city will push for felony charges once an arrest is made.

Zienkowski said police believe the person is a local resident. He said the city will try to involve federal Homeland Security in the investigation.

Detective Dean Weinhardt is handling the case. He can be reached at 330-225-9111.

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