



Introduction to *SafeChurch* Program by

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Churches are high on the list for arson (See [typical story\\*](#)), vandalism, and theft of church electronics. RURAL churches, or those in lower income metro areas are most at risk and therein lies the problem.

Because of limited funds, many churches do not have insurance and rarely do smaller churches have a smoke detection and notification alarm system. Even the ones that do have alarm systems find them to be generally ineffective due to delays associated

with call transfers from the monitoring center and response time. (in particular with calls requiring law enforcement response in rural areas).

To address this problem, Falcon Direct developed the *SafeChurch Program*, a partnership between participating volunteer fire departments, local area churches, and Falcon Direct. The heart of this system is a gadget known as the *QuikFire Reporter*, the result of a fund raiser donation for the Forest Home Alabama VFD. Click [here\\*](#) for additional details. The program was formally introduced to the public at the Fireman's Appreciation Weekend in Monroeville, AL on June 3/4, 2011 with a second *QuikFire Reporter* donated to William Neal of the Luverne Fire Department for use by a selected local area church. (Note: Fire marshal approval required for use of this device in most areas.)



The basic *QuikFire Reporter* is a battery powered desk calculator sized alarm detection and VHF or UHF notification system coupled to a UL approved smoke detector. In the event of a fire, the *QuikFire Reporter* instantly transmits a voice message such as *Fire at Pineywoods Church* directly to radios used by local area volunteer fireman. There is no monthly monitoring fee or delays associated with alarm monitoring centers and local area dispatch operations. The response can be VERY fast, which brings us to the real value of the *QuikFire Reporter*. This incredible device sells for only \$695 including the smoke detector, a small price to pay for rapid fire response, but this is only part of the story!

As mentioned previously, many small churches do not have insurance which can easily cost several thousand dollars per year. That's a pretty good chunk of change for a 25 member congregation! Even with insurance, there is generally a thousand dollar deductible (or more). Even a fifty dollar per month security system might be out of reach since such systems require a phone line and many small churches don't have a phone!

Now, let's take a look at the *QuikFire Reporter* alternative. As we said, the cost is only \$695 with no installation cost, no monthly monitoring fees, and no delays. That's a pretty good solution. Better yet, we can make it even better by adding one or more additional sensors to detect unauthorized entry, power failure, or tampering with the AC Unit.

## How it works

The basic *QuikFire Reporter* is a desk calculator sized battery powered, switch activated, voice annunciating VHF or UHF transmitter supplied with a UL approved smoke detector and provisions for adding an additional sensor input if desired. Or, putting it another way, it is an affordable and efficient way for churches to speed up the notification process in the event of fire. It does this by transmitting a voice message directly to the radios of participating local area fire departments. Here's how this works:

From a cost benefit review, the purchase of a *QuikFire Reporter* can be significant - Just a small one-time cost for instant notification, improved response time, and no monthly monitoring fees. We should point out that that this is NOT an approved smoke/fire alarm system. Such systems must be installed by licensed installers in accord with applicable State fire codes.

*QuikFire Reporter* is an alternative to an alarm system that is available for use in those situations where lack of phone lines or budgetary constraints prohibit the use of conventional fire alarm systems. Neither Falcon Direct nor participating fire department makes any assertion of guaranteed performance or fulfilling user expectations. The *QuikFire Reporter* is simply a tool that can be used when approved by the local fire marshal to potentially improve the fire notification process.

No installation is required. The user simply places the battery powered smoke detector and the *QuikFire Reporter* in a suitable location. There are no electrical connections or wiring required. The only maintenance required is an annual replacement of the batteries (6 - AA alkalines) and/or the 9V battery in the smoke detector. If battery replacement is required before the annual exchange, a low battery alarm will be transmitted to associated radios.

## Fire Department Participation

As previously noted, local fire marshal approval is required to use the *QuikFire Reporter*. Calls can be transmitted directly to a local fire department on their 2-way radio channel for users within suitable reception areas (subject to fire department participation in the direct notification program). In some cases, it may be necessary to use a high powered version of the *QuikFire Reporter* which adds \$300 to the cost (i.e. \$995 instead of \$695). Either VHF or UHF capability is required.

Many Alabama Fire Departments use radios that are dependent upon network infrastructure (repeaters) owned and operated by the Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC). We do not recommend that you use AFC frequencies in conjunction with *QuikFire Reporters* since these frequencies are specifically for use in firefighting activities, not for fire reporting. We also do not recommend sending *QuikFire Reporter* calls to 911 or other central dispatch centers since they are generally prohibited from receiving calls from automated devices (a topic for another discussion).

If your department is agreeable to supporting the reception of calls originated by *QuikFire Reporters*, we recommend that such calls be received on a tactical frequency rather than primary dispatch frequencies unless you are the FCC license holder for the frequency. If you do elect to participate in the *SafeChurch Program*, we offer a special incentive in the form of a one hundred dollar contribution to your department for every *QuikFire Reporter* installed in your fire district. When you provide us with a listing of all churches in your area, we will prepare and mail information on the *SafeChurch* program at no cost to you. Working together, we can make your community safer!

If you don't have a frequency that can be used for reception of fire alert calls, we will work with you on alternatives, several of which will be discussed on the following page.

In some instances, for a variety of reasons, a local fire department may not be able to provide direct response service. In such situations, we have an alternative solution. It's called *Community Alert*. It works like this.....

One or more nearby church members acquire a low cost 2-way radio to monitor the applicable *QuikFire Reporter*. When they receive a message, they can immediately call 911. It's not as fast as direct connect with the fire department but it is a whole lot better than other alternatives!



The radio we normally use for community monitoring of *QuikFire Reporter* alerts is only \$349. The *DeskTop Reporter* shown at the left is ideal for monitoring calls for all *QuikFire Reporter* models.

In some instances, it may be possible to get a grant or endowment funding for a neighborhood communications network. This could pay for *QuikTalk Reporters* AND *DeskTop Reporters* for use in the home as a part of the Neighborhood Watch program.

As you can see, there are many alternatives - none of them expensive in comparison to the cost associated with insurance deductions, uninsured equipment replacement, or monthly monitoring services.

## Community Alert Option

Actually, there can be a benefit in sending alarm calls to one or more homes in an area since the capability of the system can be expanded to perform other functions besides fire alerting. As noted above, the Community Alert option is available in areas where direct notification to a local area fire department is not feasible.

The use of the *DeskTop Reporter* by community members for alarm reception adds minimal cost, and isn't quite as fast as direct contact to the fire department, but there are some significant advantages in selecting this option. For example, the number one problem for churches is copper theft followed by burglary and vandalism. The problem is that these events are law enforcement, rather than fire related.

Even churches that have alarm systems find them to be generally ineffective due to delays associated with call transfers from the monitoring center and response time (in particular with calls requiring law enforcement response in rural areas). A similar problem extends to farms (copper irrigation pipe), municipal buildings, utility power stations, and even fire departments! There are ways to respond to the problem, but most are generally ineffective (See South Carolina [story](#)\*).

The fact is that a rural fire department can respond MUCH quicker than law enforcement agencies in rural areas. If your department is willing to answer non-fire calls, it could be a significant crime deterrent in your community. It's OK for a fire department to respond to a theft or vandalism call as long as you acknowledge that law enforcement is not your business. The sound of a siren (whether EMS, Fire, or Police) will send bad guys scampering. You can develop a road block plan, get tag numbers, or develop an action plan that will show the bad guys that you mean business.

With the aforementioned thoughts in mind, you can expand the potential of the *QuikTalk Reporter* to perform a variety of supplemental functions such as adding one or more of the following options.

**AC Power Reporter Option** - Adds \$195. Sends a radio alarm message if thieves cut off power (to keep from getting shocked when they are stealing your air conditioner).

**Copper Theft Reporter (CTR) Option** - Adds \$195. The only hope you have of stopping copper thieves is to slow them down, coupled with rapid response. In essence, the same procedures apply here as they do inside burglaries, The difference is that you are monitoring equipment OUTSIDE the building!



The number one thing you can do to reduce or eliminate air conditioner copper theft is to make it hard for the bad guys to get to the copper. One of the better solutions is to enclose your AC unit in a cage, then connect the cage to a sensor connected to the *QuikFire Reporter*. If you are handy with tools, you can build one yourself for under a hundred dollars. Click [here](#)\* for details. The notification process is fast and efficient. The moment one of the rebar rods are cut, the CTR option is activated and a message is immediately broadcast.

If you prefer, you can purchase a commercial cage and either install it yourself or have it done by a local contractor. The cost of the cage will vary depending on size, with prices starting at under \$300. That is a WHOLE lot less a thousand dollar deductible if you have insurance, or the replacement cost of the AC unit which typically ranges from a low of five thousand dollars to well over twenty thousand dollars! For additional information on commercial cage units, click [here](#)\*.

**Premise Reporter Option** - Adds \$195. Motion sensor with keypad on/off controller. Detects motion inside building when "they" come to take your PC's, amplifiers, video projectors, musical instruments and other electronics. Although this is a job normally done by law enforcement, it is sometimes necessary (even preferred) to send the alert call to the fire department. We are not advocating armed conflict, but thieves run when they hear a siren - ANY siren. You can get tag numbers and block exits while waiting for law enforcement. The trick is to act QUICKLY if you want to put a stop to vandalism and burglary.



Note: All prices quoted above include necessary wiring and sensors with simple instructions for connecting additional sensors. The *QuikFire Reporter* unit shown on the previous page can serve a maximum of two devices. The new *QuikFire Reporter II* is the same price excluding any sensor. The difference between the two units, other than appearance is that the *QuikTalk Reporter II* can accommodate up to four external sensors with a different voice message associated with each sensor. The *QuikFire Reporter III*, priced at \$995 also includes a wireless receiver for use with wireless sensors for easier installation. This model also includes a more powerful transmitter than the standard *QuikFire Reporter*.

In summary, you don't have to be a victim! Working together, we can make your community a better place to live by reducing fire hazards, getting a handle on copper theft, and making it tougher for those who would break into your premises. We haven't mentioned financing, but we recognize that spreading the cost out is better than not having the service.

If you wish, we can provide a complete package, customized to your individual requirements with air conditioner cage and installation included, then work with you to spread the payments over a reasonable amount of time. We're ready to help you put a stop to your community being victimized. Are you?

The Falcon Team  
*At your service!*

**Special Note:**

A variation of the SafeChurch program is available for law enforcement agencies. Additional information is available at [www.info4u.us/RobberStopper.pdf](http://www.info4u.us/RobberStopper.pdf).

You may also be interested to know that both the SafeChurch and the RobberStopper programs may qualify for grant or endowment funding. Call Falcon Direct at 205.854.2611 or email [ServinU@falcondirect.com](mailto:ServinU@falcondirect.com) for additional information.

(\*) If you are reading this material off line and wish to view the linked articles, please refer to the following sites to download the referenced articles at your convenience.

1) Forest Home story - [http://www.info4u.us/Forest\\_Home\\_Story.pdf](http://www.info4u.us/Forest_Home_Story.pdf)

2) Arson story - Church photo courtesy of MSNBC  
<http://www.squidoo.com/churchburning#module37449702>

3) Copper theft story - Air conditioner photo courtesy of WSFA - Montgomery, AL  
<http://bullockcounty.wsfa.com/content/copper-thieves-target-church-air-conditioners>

3) South Carolina story - Article courtesy of The State Newspaper - Columbia, SC  
<http://www.thestate.com/2011/02/23/1707853/copper-thieves-hit-midlands-churches.html>

5) Build you own AC Cage - [http://reinews.net/1181573514/index\\_html](http://reinews.net/1181573514/index_html)

6) Commercial grade Air Conditioning Cages - <http://www.ac-guard.com/index.htm>

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