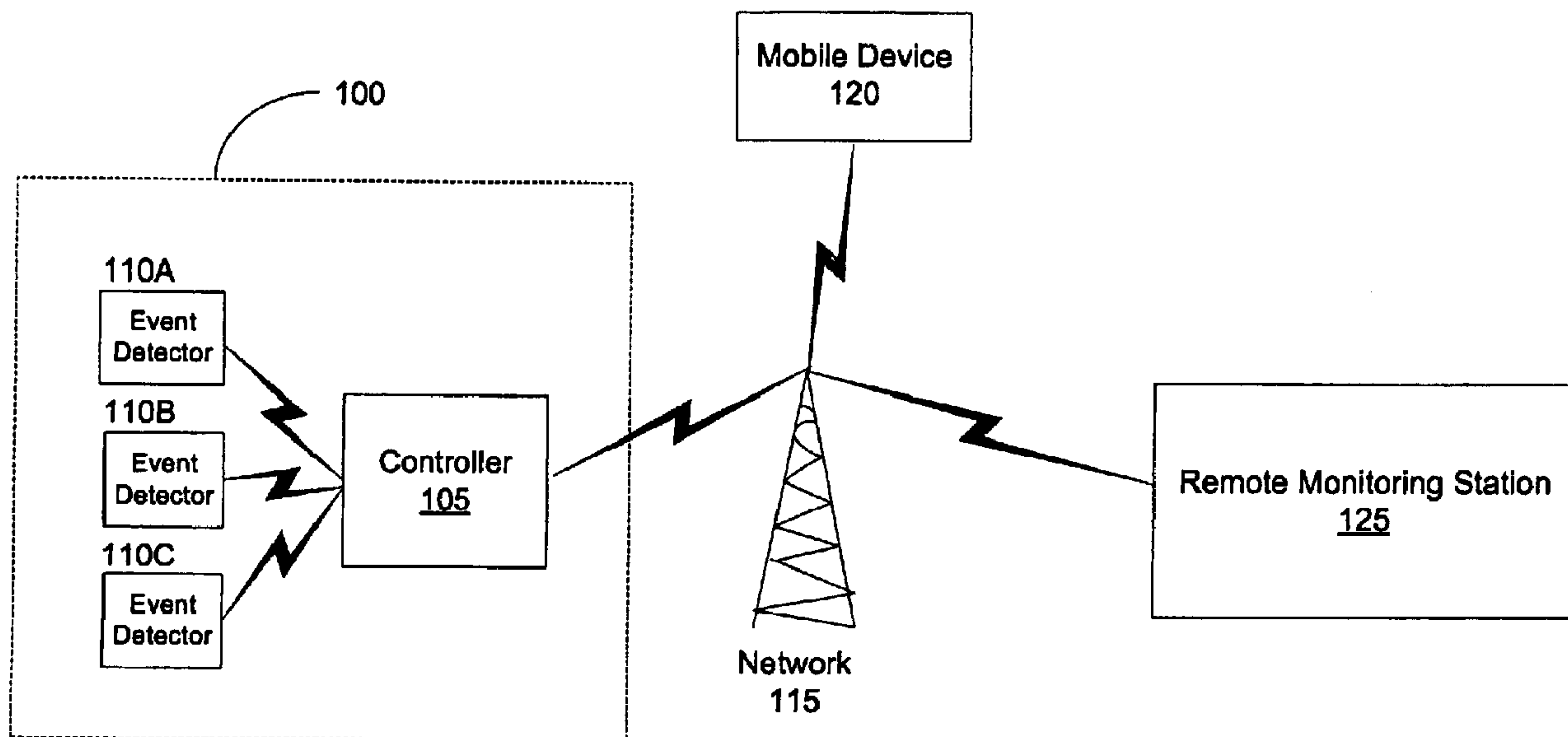




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(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**

A portable service escrowed event reporting system that may be sold through mass-market sales channels. Communications between a consumer and the provider of the event reporting system are not required in advance of the system being purchased by the consumer. After purchase of the system by the consumer, the system may be initialized. The service may have a finite amount of service associated with it when it is purchased. The consumer may choose to have the system report the occurrence of reportable events directly to them over a wireless network.

ABSTRACT

A portable service escrowed event reporting system that may be sold through mass-market sales channels. Communications between a consumer and the provider of the event reporting system are not required in advance of the system being purchased by the consumer. After purchase of the system by the consumer, the system may be initialized. The service may have a finite amount of service associated with it when it is purchased. The consumer may choose to have the system report the occurrence of reportable events directly to them over a wireless network.

**SERVICE ESCROWED TRANSPORTABLE WIRELESS EVENT
REPORTING SYSTEM**

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention generally relates to a wireless event reporting system for home, office, or a temporary location that is suitable for mass-market distribution and configured for transport to different installation sites.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Conventional event reporting systems are typically permanently fixed to a location, installed by a service company, and monitored over telephone or data communications services. These systems may have sensors or detectors permanently installed to detect reportable events, such as intrusion or environmental conditions, which preclude the system from being easily removed and used at another location. Further, conventional event reporting systems are typically limited to reporting reportable events to a service company (i.e., a monitoring agency) using fixed communications services, such as landline telephone service, Internet, or derived data channels. Therefore, as is usually the case, the consumer of the event reporting system may only receive a notice of reportable events if someone at the monitoring service company acts to contact the consumer. Accordingly, in conventional

reporting and monitoring systems, the consumer does not have the option of having the reportable events reported directly to them by the event reporting system.

Further, because conventional event reporting systems are typically installed and monitored by a service company, consumers typically must agree to a service contract or otherwise communicate with the monitoring service company prior to the installation of the event reporting systems. For example, it is not uncommon for a consumer to schedule an "installation" time with the service company and/or make advance payment for monitoring services. Thus, with conventional event reporting systems, the consumer is required at some point of time to disclose his or her identity to the service company.

Additionally, as noted, conventional event reporting systems are installed by a service company, typically by using service technicians. This adds additional cost to the event reporting system and, once permanently installed, keeps the event reporting system from being easily moved to another location by the consumer. Because of this, the consumer may be reluctant to use a conventional event reporting system. For example, installation costs and other costs of the event reporting system may be cost prohibitive for some consumers. Additionally, if a consumer would like to monitor the security or environment of a space temporarily, they may not want to expend time or money on a permanent alarm system. In these instances, conventional event monitoring systems do not provide a viable option to meet consumers' demands. Accordingly, there currently exists a need in the art for a widely-available, service escrowed portable monitoring system that a consumer may conveniently purchase and install anywhere he or she chooses.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The portable monitoring system described herein may be sold and purchased through widely-available, mass-market channels. For example, the system may be sold in a blister-pack-type package at a retail outlet for purchase by consumers. The consumer may install the system in any location, including, but not limited to, a home, office, vehicle, or motel room. Unlike conventional systems, no communication between the consumer and the provider of the event monitoring service are required to use the system. Further, since the device may be purchased with escrowed service, no billing arrangements or contracts with a service provider are necessary.

After selecting the portable system, the consumer may proceed to setup the event reporting system in any location. The event reporting system may comprise a microprocessor based controller (hereafter referred to as "controller") with short range wireless communications capability for communicating with wireless sensors and long range wireless communications capability, such as audio and data over cellular telephony. The event reporting system also comprises one or more event detectors for monitoring security intrusions or other environmental events (e.g., fire, carbon monoxide, etc). The event detectors can communicate detected reportable events via short range wireless capabilities or wired communication paths. Events that may be detected by a detector may be referred to hereinafter broadly as "reportable events." The event reporting system may also comprise one or more human interfaces, such as an LCD screen or speaker for conveying information to the consumer, primarily during installation, and a keypad or microphone for conveying information from the consumer to the controller. Additionally, the event reporting system may comprise a human interface for conveying information to or from the consumer via a

telecommunication path by tones, email, data packets, or speech recognition and synthesis.

Once the event reporting system has been set up, the consumer may initialize and event monitoring service through the controller. For example, upon powering up, the controller may contact a remote monitoring station or other third-party host server over a wireless network. The controller may convey its identity to the remote monitoring station so that the escrowed service pre-associated with that identity may be activated for time, data volume, or both. The remote monitoring station may request information from the consumer, including, but not limited to, an identification for processing remote commands received from the consumer (e.g., a code that may be found with the packaging for the system or created by the system) and information for directly reporting reportable events to the consumer (e.g., a mobile device number). Also, the remote monitoring station may request information from the consumer to identify how the consumer desires to receive reportable event information, for example, a telephone number to be called for synthesized voice reporting or an email address for reporting event information as text.

After initialization, the event reporting system may detect, through the use of the sensors and detectors, the occurrence of any reportable event. If an event is detected, the event reporting system may contact the consumer directly or forward information to the remote monitoring station. If the consumer is contacted directly by the event reporting system, the message may be sent to the consumer via a wireless network in the form of a Short Message Service ("SMS") or data connection over commercially available wireless communication service's data channels, including but not limited, to General Packet Radio Service ("GPRS"), 1XRTT, 1XEV-DO, 1XMC, 3XMC or WCDMA. Further, if an event is reported to the remote monitoring

station, it may subsequently be forwarded to the consumer using one or more of the aforementioned commercially available wireless data services.

In a broad aspect, the invention pertains to a method for providing a system for wireless event monitoring and associated event monitoring services, comprising the steps of, in preparation for sale of the system through a mass-market sales channel, associating a number with the system, associating with the number a specified amount of the services to be deemed prepaid with consumer purchase of the system, subsequent to consumer purchase of the system, receiving from the system a wireless signal conveying the number, and responsive to receiving the number, activating services for the system in accordance with the specified amount of services.

In a further aspect, the invention provides a method for providing a wireless event monitoring system that comprises hardware, embedded software, and monitoring service. The method comprises the steps of: assigning an identity to a controller during manufacture of the controller, and offering for sale, through a mass-market sales channel, a package comprising the hardware, the embedded software, and the monitoring service. The hardware comprises the controller and uses, by the controller, the assigned identity to connect to a wireless network automatically upon power up. The monitoring service is escrowed for activation of services upon the automatic connection of the controller to the wireless network.

Yet further, the invention comprehends a method for providing a wireless monitoring system that comprises hardware, embedded software, and monitoring service. The method comprises the steps of: assigning an identity to a controller during manufacture of the controller, offering for sale through a mass-market sales channel a package comprising, a system, comprising the hardware and the embedded software, the hardware comprising the controller, and the monitoring service. The monitoring service is escrowed for activation of services upon the automatic connection of the controller to a wireless network, and upon power up of the controller, automatically connects the controller to the wireless network using the assigned identity.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 illustrates a functional block diagram of an operating environment for a portable event reporting system, according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 2 illustrates a logic flow diagram for using the portable event reporting system, according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 3 illustrates a logic flow diagram for initializing and using the portable event monitoring system, according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 4 illustrates a logic flow diagram for using the portable event reporting system to detect and report reportable events; according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENTS

The inventive system comprises a transportable, wireless system that may be used at any location chosen by a consumer, including, but not limited to, a consumer's home, office, or temporary location. An exemplary embodiment of the present invention is designed for commercial distribution and may be sold through massmarket sales channels in appropriate packaging, such as in a blister-pack where the system can be seen by prospective consumers. Mass market sales channels may include, but are not limited to, supermarkets, convenience stores, and superstores.

The system, in one exemplary embodiment, may comprise a disposable controller. Further, the system may provide escrow event reporting (i.e., pre-paid event reporting services). One advantage of the escrowed event reporting system over conventional systems is that it does not require communications with a service provider prior to purchase; that is, the consumer may purchase the portable event reporting system without communicating with the provider to set up a billing identity or provide other identifying information. Furthermore, because the system is capable of being compact in size, wireless, and easy to install, a consumer may move the system to different locations, unlike the permanent setup associated with conventional systems.

As noted above, the portable event reporting system does not require that a billing identity be established for the consumer. According to an exemplary embodiment, the transportable service escrowed event reporting system connects to a remote server, such as a remote monitoring station, when the product is powered on for the first time. By doing so, the remote monitoring station determines and activates the escrowed service for the system. Additionally, the escrowed service may be activated by the consumer entering a device identity, such as the International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI), a number unique to every GSM and UMTS wireless telephone, or Electronic Serial Number or MEID of CDMA and other wireless networks, by using a keypad and/or liquid crystal display ("LCD") located on a controller of the system, or via speech recognition and voice synthesis using a microphone and speaker in the controller. Alternatively or additionally, the consumer may convey the system identity to activate the escrowed service by placing a telephone call to a remote host server capable of interacting through voice prompts or DTMF tones. For example, in one exemplary embodiment, the consumer may be

provided the option of calling a 1-800 number that connects to a remote monitoring station to initialize the event reporting system after it has been purchased.

Because the event reporting system is designed to be portable, in an exemplary embodiment, all communications within the monitored premises, as well as the remote delivery of alarms, can be performed via wireless communications. For instance, in an exemplary embodiment, the controller may receive notice of reportable events through short range wireless event detectors, including, but not limited to, door/window opening detectors, glass breakage detectors, motion detectors, temperature detectors, and smoke detectors. These sensors and detectors may be implemented using industry-standard, short-range, wireless sensors. Wireless sensors typically communicate over a radio-frequency spectrum, such as those utilized by IEEE standards 802.14.4, 802.11 or 802.15.1, and do not utilize cellular telecommunications services; however, the controller and detectors may use any wired or wireless protocol to communicate, including any other short-range wireless communications known to one of ordinary skill in the art.

Upon the detection of a reportable event, the event reporting system may report the event either "direct" to the consumer or through an intermediary, such as a remote monitoring station. In an exemplary embodiment, direct alarm reporting can be implemented by a direct communication path to the consumer using a "controller to consumer" approach. For example, a reportable event can be communicated directly to the consumer through any one of several mediums including, but not limited to, email conveyed from the controller by via wireless telephone-based Short Messaging Service (SMS) or data connection protocols, such as email, and over commercially available wireless communication service's data channels, including but not limited to 1XRTT, 1XEV-DO, 1XMC, 3XMC or WCDMA or General Packet

Radio Services (GPRS). Such messages are typically presented to the consumer on their cellular telephone screen, pager, personal digital assistant ("PDA"), or personal computer. Alternatively, direct alarm reporting can be achieved in the form of speech, where alarm information is converted into audio synthesized speech and conveyed from the controller to a consumer's predefined telephone number in the form of spoken words.

As mentioned above, alarm reporting may also be accomplished through an intermediary using the event monitoring system. In an exemplary embodiment, this intermediary may be the remote monitoring station, and the controller of the event reporting system may contact the remote monitoring station using alarm-industry, standard tone sequences within the audio channel of wireless telephony, or via data representations of either alarm industry data formats or proprietary protocols conveyed by the SMS or data channels of wireless telephony, such as described above.

The transportable service escrowed event reporting system may be configured when it is first turned on or subsequent thereto. Configuration of the system may be accomplished via an LCD screen and/or keypad located on the controller. Alternatively or additionally, configuration may occur by the consumer dialing a 1-800 number to provide information to the remote monitoring station, which may in turn provide pertinent information (e.g., a telephone number for reporting reportable events) to the controller through a network (as discussed below). Additionally, system reconfiguration may be accomplished via data messages conveyed from the consumer's wireless telephone in the form of SMS or other data messages, which may be carried by the data channels of the serving cellular system. Also, reconfiguration

may be accomplished by calling a 1-800 number to access the remote monitoring station.

When configuration is accomplished remotely, it may be important to authenticate the consumer. Accordingly, in one exemplary embodiment, authentication of the consumer's identity can be accomplished by the system's recognition of the consumer's calling line ID (CLID), which may be previously registered through functions of the configuration LCD screen and keypad located on the controller or provided to the remote monitoring station. Thus, in order to authenticate the consumer, the consumer may be required when configuring the system to enter an identification that can be used to authenticate his or her identity or mobile device. This identification may comprise an identity for the event reporting system or another unique identification, such as a personal identification number ("PIN") selected by the consumer.

Alternatively or additionally, system configuration and/or reconfiguration can be accomplished via data messages conveyed in the audio channel of the consumer's wireless telephone via DTMF tone sequences from the consumer's telephone. Similarly, system configuration/reconfiguration may be accomplished via speech recognition of words spoken by the consumer and conveyed from the consumer's cellular telephone over the voice channel of a telephone service. For example, a consumer may connect to the controller through a wireless network and speak a pass-code previously registered with the system in order to re-configure the system.

Turning to the several figures, in which like reference numerals represent like elements, Figure 1 illustrates a representative operating environment of the transportable service escrowed event reporting system 100, according to an exemplary embodiment. As illustrated, the transportable service escrowed event reporting

system 100 may comprise a microprocessor enabled controller 105 (which may or may not be disposable) and one or more event detectors 110a-c. The event detectors 110a-c may comprise any industry-standard, short-range wireless security or environmental sensors, such as, but not limited to, door/window opening detectors, glass breakage detectors, and motion detectors. According to an exemplary embodiment, the controller 105 and detectors 110a-c may be sold in any packaging suitable for mass-market distribution. One such packaging may be blister-type packaging, which may comprise a plastic packaging material surrounding the portable event reporting system 100. When packaged this way, the system 100 can be sold through mass-market sales channels, including, but not limited to, supermarkets, superstore, or via the Internet. This wide-spread availability of the portable event reporting system 100 is possible because, unlike conventional systems, service and billing information for the portable event reporting system 100 is not required prior to a consumer purchasing and installing the system 100 in his or her home or office (if at all).

As further illustrated in Figure 1, the portable event reporting system 100 may connect to a remote monitoring station 125 over a network 115. In an exemplary embodiment, the network 115 may comprise any wireless data network, whereby messages may be exchanged using SMS and/or connection based protocols using commercially available wireless data connection capability such as that offered by GPRS or 1XRTT and their derivatives. The remote monitoring station 125 may comprise a third-party, who may or may not manufacture and provide the portable event reporting system 100 to the consumer.

In an exemplary embodiment, the portable event reporting system 100 contacts the remote monitoring station 125 automatically over the network 115 when

it is powered on for the first time by the consumer. This may be done through a transceiver connected to or incorporated within the controller 105, and may allow alarm device 105 to establish an operational identity (if not pre-assigned to the device, as discussed below), such as an EMSI, Electronic Serial Number, or MEID, and also allows the consumer the opportunity to configure the portable event reporting system 100 and enter notification preferences for use with the system 100.

Connection through the network 115 may occur by using an identity pre-assigned to the controller 105. For example, an identity for a wireless provider may be assigned to the controller 105 during its manufacture. In this way, the controller 105 may automatically connect to the network 115 when it is first powered on by the consumer. Alternatively, however, the controller 105 may be provided an identity after it is powered on. In this exemplary embodiment, the consumer may call a number found on the product packaging for the controller 105 or system 100 to connect to a remote monitoring station (e.g., dialing a 1-800 number). The remote monitoring station 125 may then request that the consumer enter a unique identification for the device, such as the device's IMEI number, if GSM, or Electronic Serial Number or MEID if CDMA or other wireless technology, for initializing the controller 105.

After the identification has been entered, the remote monitoring station 125 may send a message to the controller via SMS or connection based wireless data communication 105 over the network 115, in which case the controller 105 may respond with information in order to establish the operational identity for the controller 105.

Further still, the controller 105 may be assigned a generic identity (i.e., an identity used for a group of controllers sold through mass-market sales channels) for

use at its initial power up. In this exemplary embodiment, the controller may establish an operational identity by contacting the remote monitoring station 125 upon power-up using the generic identity. Following this contact, the remote monitoring station 125 may assign a different, unique operational identity to the controller 105 for any future communication between the controller 105 and the remote monitoring station 125.

Once the operational identity for the controller 105 has been determined, the system 100 may provide a wireless device unique identity number, such as the IMEI of a GSM device, or Electronic Serial Number or MEID if CDMA or other wireless technology, automatically to the remote monitoring station 125 to ensure the device is identified properly. Alternatively, as discussed above, the consumer may provide this information to the remote monitoring station 125 via a 1-800 number.

Further, the remote monitoring station 125 may prompt the consumer for information. This prompt may be sent over the network to the controller 105 or the prompt may be performed through the use of a 1-800 number the consumer uses to configure the system 100. In either case, the remote monitoring station 125 may request contact information specifying where reportable events should be reported. For example, the remote monitoring station 125 may request the consumer to “specify a number to call when a fire is detected” or “specify a number to call when a burglary is detected.” In one exemplary embodiment, the controller 105 may comprise a LCD screen and keypad that allows the consumer to configure and enter information into the portable event reporting system 100. Thus, using these components, the consumer may enter an identification that will allow him or her to communicate with the controller 105 remotely. This identification may comprise a pass-code, a mobile number through which calling line ID (“CLID”) can be checked, or another unique

identifier. This pass-code may allow the consumer to validate himself or herself when remotely connecting to the system 100. For example, if a consumer wishes to re-configure the system 100, he or she may call the system 100 with a mobile device. The system 100 may have stored the number for the mobile device previously entered into the system 100 using the controller 105 keypad. In this way, the system 100 will recognize the CLID number for the mobile device and allow the consumer to change the configuration of the system 100 via data messages conveyed from the consumer's cellular telephone, such as through SMS messages or email via wireless channelized data communications such as GPRS or 1XRTT and their derivatives. Alternatively or additionally, when the consumer calls the portable system, he or she may speak or enter the pass-code or other identification information previously stored to use the system 100. This pass code may also comprise the identity of the one or more mobile devices that the consumer may authorize to re-configure the system 100.

In an exemplary embodiment, the transportable service escrowed event reporting system 100 may communicate with a consumer mobile device 120 over the network 115. Thus, when the consumer initializes the reporting service, the consumer may also be prompted by the controller 105 to enter a mobile number to contact the consumer when directly reporting reportable events. This way, when the system 100 is in a direct report mode, if the controller 105 receives a signal from one of the detectors 110 attached to it, it may automatically send a message to the consumer mobile device 120 over the network 115 using the number provided by the consumer.

Turning to Figure 2, because the portable event reporting system 100 may be sold and marketed through mass-market channels, a consumer may simply visit a store and purchase a "kit" comprising the portable event reporting system 100, take the kit to the desired location, install it, and initialize the system. Figure 2 illustrates

an exemplary method for setting up the transportable service escrowed event reporting system 100. The process begins at step 205, where a consumer visits a store and purchases the transportable service escrowed event reporting system 100. For example, the consumer can buy the system 100 at a retail outlet, where the system may be packaged in a blister pack that houses all items required to support the consumer's alarm service. Further, according to an exemplary embodiment, the consumer may purchase the system 100 pre-packaged with communication services (i.e., pre-paid time or usage over a wireless network) that will support the controller's 105 initial set-up and basic operations. Further, new services may be acquired at a later date based on new purchases. For example, according to an exemplary embodiment, a tiered service level offering can be provided to the consumer. Basic service may cover set-up and a pre-set number of alarm event communications; advanced service may cover maintenance (in the form of a periodic testing of the radio messaging system by the remote monitoring station 125) and a pre-set number of alarm event communications; and premium service may cover regular tests of the radio messaging system (e.g., daily or every pre-set number of days) in combination with a pre-set number of alarm event communications. Each of these services would be sold with their own escrowed service (i.e., prepaid event reporting) and would require activation in a manner similar to that of the basic system in order to enable such advanced features.

As mentioned above, the portable event reporting system 100 may comprise a radio transceiver or transmitter (not illustrated) for communicating with the network 115. This radio transceiver or transmitter may be integrated within the controller or, in alternative embodiments, may be physically separate from, but connected to, the controller. For example, in one exemplary embodiment, the controller 105 may not

have a transceiver, but instead may be tethered or ported with a consumer's mobile device to communicate over the network 115. In either embodiment, a transceiver may—upon system power-up by a consumer—initiate an automated configuration process with the server or remote monitoring station 125 to identify the system 100 and/or controller 105. Specifically, as discussed, the radio transceiver may forward its pre-assigned operational identity to the remote monitoring station 125 over the network 115 or it may receive an operational identity in response to a message sent by the remote monitoring station 125. For example, as mentioned, the remote monitoring station 125 may forward an operational identity to the controller 105 based on the consumer's interaction with a 1-800 telephone service related to the remote monitoring station 125. Further, the consumer may be allowed to reconfigure the radio and the alarm service through subsequent interactions with a 1-800 telephone service related to the remote monitoring station 125.

The system 100 may come pre-packaged with a certain number of event detectors 110. At step 210, the consumer installs the detectors 110 in appropriate places. As discussed, the detectors may comprise standard wireless detectors as known by one of ordinary skill in the art.

After the detectors are installed, the transportable service escrowed event reporting system 100 may be initialized at step 215. In an exemplary process, this initialization occurs when the controller 105 is turned on for the first time and the portable event reporting system 100 connects to the remote monitoring station 125 through the network 115 and establishes an operational identity (as previously discussed). According to an exemplary embodiment, the system 100 may be turned on by the consumer pulling a battery tab or by pressing a power button on the controller 105. The controller then automatically goes through the process of

connecting to the remote monitoring station 110 (if already supplied an identity) or awaits a message from the remote monitoring station 110 (if not already supplied an identity).

After initialization, the system 100 may inform the consumer as to the communication status of the device (e.g., through a sound or blinking light indicating that the unit has properly connected to the remote monitoring station 125). Then, if so equipped, the consumer may be prompted by an LCD display on the controller 105 to enter information to configure the event reporting system at step 220. During this step, according to an exemplary embodiment, the event reporting system 100 may request that the consumer enter contact information into a keypad attached to the controller 105 in order to use the features of the system 100. Contact information may comprise, for example, a telephone number or email address for the consumer. The controller 105 may, in turn, forward the information collected from the consumer to the remote monitoring station 125. Additionally, certain information may be stored in memory connected to the controller 105. For example, a consumer may enter a preference for receiving reportable information by entering his or her telephone number. The controller may store that number locally so that it can route a message to the consumer relaying the occurrence of a reportable event over the network 115.

Alternatively or in addition to the above, the controller 105 may prompt the consumer (using an on-device display screen, voice prompt, or through packaging material) to configure the radio for reporting events by interacting with a 1-800 telephone service. In particular, the consumer may enter data via the 1-800 telephone to configure the system 100 to communicate event data to the consumer in a preferred format, such as via email to a designated email address or by phone to a mobile or landline phone number. For example, as described above, during the initial

configuration of the system 100, a voice or display prompt on the controller 105 can prompt the consumer to enter the radio's serial number, which is known to be associated with a unique identifier assigned to the radio.

In addition to the above, the consumer may also be prompted to enter an identification at step 220 so that the consumer can control the controller remotely. For instance, the consumer may enter a CLID identifying his or her mobile device so that messages from that mobile device number can be used to control the portable event reporting system 100. For instance, the system 100 can perform authentication of the consumer's identity by recognition of the CLID of the consumer's mobile telephone. However, in the alternative, the portable event reporting system 100 can perform authentication of the consumer's identity by interpreting data messages conveyed from the consumer's cellular telephone via DTMF tone sequences over the voice channel of the serving cellular system. Further, in yet another embodiment, the portable event reporting system 100 can perform authentication of the consumer's identity by speech recognition of words spoken by the consumer and conveyed by the telephone. The consumer's spoken words may, for example, constitute a pass-code ID previously registered by the consumer using the controller 105.

Another prompt can request for the consumer to enter his or her preferred contact mechanism (e.g., an e-mail address or telephone number) to be used for directly reporting the occurrence of a reportable event. Upon completion of data entry by the consumer, the controller 105 can initiate communications diagnostics and confirm the radio's ability to receive and transmit messages to a remote monitoring station 125. A prepaid data communications service can be provided at the outset of radio operations to facilitate the initial communications exchange (set-up operations) between the controller 105 and the remote monitoring station 125. In an exemplary

embodiment, subsequent communications of reportable events can be supported by the consumer's purchase of additional prepaid wireless minutes or reporting credits (through the controller 105 or via a 1-800 number connecting to the remote monitoring station 125). Further, in another embodiment, the consumer may purchase the unit from a mass-market sales channel wherein the system 100 is capable of performing a finite number of communications (i.e., a certain amount of communication services used by the system 100 to report reportable events may be pre-paid when the system 100 is purchased by the consumer). It is noted that due to the service escrowed nature of the invention (i.e., it is capable of being a prepaid system), a monthly billing service relationship with the company related to the remote monitoring station 125 or provider of the portable event reporting system 100 is not required for operation of the radio or the alarm event service for a predetermined time or quantity of events. Thus, the portable event reporting system 100 offers the ability of a consumer to conveniently purchase a pre-paid event reporting system 100 that requires no information from the consumer prior to the purchase and use of the device (if at all).

The system 100 also provides the consumer the ability to select how he or she wishes to receive alerts, as illustrated at step 225. In one exemplary embodiment, the consumer may wish to receive direct reporting from the system 100. In that case, the system 100 will report the occurrence of reportable events through the wireless network 115 directly to the device specified by the consumer. Messages sent to notify the consumer of an occurrence of a reportable event may comprise any number of formats, including, but not limited to, text messages sent via SMS or connection based wireless data service such as GPRS or 1XRTT, such as e-mail sent over the wireless network. According to an exemplary embodiment, the specific format chosen for

direct reporting may be specified by the consumer when configuring (or re-configuring) the system 100.

Instead of having reportable events reported directly, the consumer may alternatively choose to have the system 100 send report messages to a third-party intermediary. In an exemplary embodiment, this intermediary may comprise the remote monitoring station 125. Accordingly, if the consumer does not choose direct routing, then the system 100 will alert the remote monitoring station 125 or other third-party over the network 115 when it detects a reportable event. The remote monitoring station 125, in turn, may notify the consumer through any number of wireless formats including, but not limited to, SMS, connection based wireless data such as GPRS or 1XRTT, text-messaging, e-mail, or other medium specified by the consumer and within the capabilities of the transportable service escrowed event reporting system 100.

As discussed, the transportable service-escrowed event reporting system 100 may be sold by a company through mass-market channels without prior communications with the consumer. In an exemplary embodiment, the system 100 may come with a finite period of time that the product may be used to report reportable events. This length of time (or other finite usage of the system 100) may, optionally, be extended by the consumer purchasing additional time through the controller 105 or calling the remote monitoring station 125 via a 1-800 number. Additionally, in another exemplary embodiment, a consumer may extend the length of time the system 100 may be used to report reportable events by providing to the remote monitoring station 125 (through the controller or via a 1-800 number) information concerning one or more pre-paid usage cards, such as pre-paid cellular service cards. For example, according to one exemplary embodiment, a consumer

may purchase a pre-paid cellular calling card (or pre-paid event reporting card) and enter the information for that card into the controller 105 to extend the capabilities of the system through cooperative business arrangements between the prepaid cellular service provider and the operator of the transportable service escrowed event reporting system 100. In this way, a consumer may purchase and use the event reporting system 100 without ever being required to establish a billing identity with the system 100 or the remote monitoring station 125.

Figure 3 illustrates an exemplary process for initializing and using the portable event reporting system 100 through the use of a remote monitoring station 125. The process begins at step 305, where the remote monitoring station 125 receives an initialization command from the controller 105 of the event reporting system 100. In an exemplary embodiment, the remote monitoring station 125 must know the physical identity of the wireless event reporting system 100. In the GSM protocol, for example, this identity is known as the International Mobile Equipment Identity ("IMEI"), which is a unique identifier used for GSM and UMTS mobile network consumers. Thus, IMEI or another type of operational identity may be used as a unique address for the portable event reporting system for use on the network 115. The identity of the system 100 allows the remote monitoring station to detect the amount of pre-paid monitoring services the consumer is entitled to (if any) using the system. For example, certain portable systems 100 may be purchased with a finite amount of pre-paid reporting services. Therefore, when the identity of the system 100 is provided to the remote monitoring station 125, the remote monitoring station 125 may perform, at step 310, a look-up based on the identity to determine and transmit the amount of pre-paid reporting services to the system 100.

Further, once the remote monitoring station 125 receives an operational identity from the wireless event reporting system 100, in an exemplary embodiment, the remote monitoring station 125 can assign a sub-identifier to the controller 105 associated with the reporting wireless radio device (which may be a derivative of the operational identity). For example, upon initial power-up, the event reporting system 100 (through the use of a radio transmitter communicably attached to the controller 105) can transmit a message comprising the system's 100 IMEI to initiate the set-up process. This IMEI will be assigned to the portable event reporting system 100. The remote monitoring station 125 receives the IMEI and responds by assigning a telephone number to the radio associated with the IMEI. In an alternative embodiment, the remote monitoring station 125 can initiate the transmission of IMEI by the radio based on a consumer's entry of data in response to information provided by the consumer via a 1-800 telephone service.

Based on the receipt of this initialization, the remote monitoring station 125 establishes a connection with the system 100 over the network 115. Through this connection, information may be exchanged by the consumer and the remote monitoring station 125. For example, during initial configuration, the system 100 may prompt the consumer for information over the network 115. Information that may be pertinent to the event reporting system 100 includes, but is not limited to, the consumer's name and a mobile number where the consumer would like to receive messages related to reportable events. Thus, regardless of the information requested or sent to the remote monitoring station, in step 315, information may be provided to the remote monitoring station 125 directly through the system 100 (e.g., through interaction with the keypad and LCD on the controller 105). Alternatively, as discussed, a consumer may also provide information to the remote monitoring station

125 in step **315** via a telephone call to the host server of the remote monitoring station **125** or via an Internet website interaction (i.e., through the completion of a form at a website).

Once the consumer has supplied information allowing the remote monitoring station **125** to activate a service escrowed account for the consumer, the remote monitoring station **125** may then monitor for communications from the portable event reporting system **100** at step **320**. In this way, the remote monitoring station **125** may act as a monitoring center for reportable events. However, unlike conventional systems, the remote monitoring station will receive messages from the portable event reporting system **100** over a wireless network **115** and may forward messages to the consumer over the wireless network **115** based on the information provided by the consumer.

Turning to Figure 4, an exemplary method for using the portable event reporting system **100** to detect and report reportable events is illustrated. The process begins at step **405**, where one or more of the portable detectors **110** detects a reportable event. Upon detecting the event, the detector **110** sends a message, at step **410**, to the controller **105** using a standard wireless protocol, e.g., via a radio-frequency channel. When the controller **105** receives the notice of the reportable event, it may choose, at step **415**, how to alert the consumer. According to an exemplary embodiment, the system **100** may report the occurrence of an event to the consumer through either direct or intermediate reporting.

If the consumer has chosen a specific type of reporting, then the controller **105** proceeds as configured by the consumer. For example, if the consumer has chosen direct reporting, then the controller **105** follows step **420**, by sending a message over the network **115** to the consumer's mobile device **120**. However, if the consumer has

chosen intermediate reporting, then the controller forwards the notice of the reportable event, at step 425, to the remote monitoring station 125 or other third-party host server. The remote monitoring station 125 may then contact the authorities, if necessary, or send a message to the consumer at step 430. According to an exemplary embodiment, the message from the remote monitoring station 125 may comprise an SMS or wireless data connection based messages, such as GPRS or 1XRTT and their derivatives.

In view of the foregoing, it will be understood that the present invention provides a portable event reporting system 100 suitable for marketing as a transportable service escrowed device for which no recurring billing identity is initially assigned to the product (if at all). The transportable service escrowed event reporting system can accomplish its initial communications through wireless interaction with a remote host server during initial power-up. In the alternative, the portable event reporting system 100 can accomplish its initial communications identity via automatic configuration through wireless interaction with a remote host server (e.g., remote monitoring station 125) initiated by the consumer placing a telephone call to a server capable of interaction through voice prompts or DTMF tones. For example, the consumer may call a "1-800" number and establish service with the provider of the portable event reporting system 100.

In contrast to conventional monitoring systems, the portable reporting system 100 can report an alarm directly to the consumer in certain exemplary embodiments. For example, the occurrence of a reportable event may be conveyed from the event reporting system 100 to the consumer in the form of discrete SMS messages presented on the screen of the consumer's wireless device. In the alternative, alarm reporting can be conveyed from the event reporting system 100 to the consumer via cellular

telephone based data connection services utilizing General Packet Radio Service (GPRS), 1XRTT, 1XEV-DO, 1XMC, 3XMC or WCDMA data channels in the form of a discrete text message presented on the screen of the consumer's wireless device. For yet another aspect of the invention, alarm reporting to the consumer can be completed via email that is conveyed wirelessly from the event reporting system via either cellular telephone based Short Messaging Service (SMS) or General Packet Radio Services (GPRS), 1XRTT, 1XEV-DO, 1XMC, 3XMC or WCDMA wireless data channels for presentation on the consumer's cellular telephone screen, pager, PDA or personal computer. Further, alarm or event reporting to the consumer can also be completed in the form of spoken words created by conversion of alarm data into audio synthesized speech that can be conveyed to a consumer preset telephone number via a voice channel telephone call.

In addition to direct reporting reportable events, the system 100 may also be configured to report the occurrence of the reportable events to an intermediary. In an exemplary embodiment, alarm or event reporting can be supported through a third-party intermediary, such as a remote monitoring station, using proprietary or alarm industry standard tone sequences within the audio channel of cellular telephony, data representations of alarm industry data formats conveyed via the SMS data channel of cellular telephony, or data representations of alarm industry data formats conveyed via the connection based wireless data channel of GPRS, 1XRTT and their derivatives of cellular telephony.

While the portable event reporting system 100 has been described as comprising a controller 105 and event detectors 110, it is noted that the system 100 may be packages and sold in many different configurations. For example, in an alternative embodiment, a cell phone may operate as part of the portable event

reporting system 100. That is, a cell phone may comprise or be communicably attached to the controller 105. In one exemplary embodiment, a cell phone comprising the controller 105 may be disposable, and the consumer may purchase one or more wireless event detectors separately or with the cell phone. In this embodiment, the cell phone may have a finite service life period (i.e., may be pre-paid). The phone may have software embedded within it for detection of reportable events transmitted by wireless event detectors. Detection of these reportable events, in an exemplary embodiment, may result in a wireless transmission through designated alert mechanisms, such as through email or a call to a phone number of the consumer. According to this exemplary embodiment, a consumer may buy the disposable phone package and one or more separate event sensors that communicate with the controller comprised with the cell phone. Alternatively, however, the cell phone may not be disposable and may comprise a cell phone already owned by a consumer. In this exemplary embodiment, a consumer may buy a software package that can be downloaded (or otherwise added) to an existing phone. For example, a consumer may purchase a replacement SIM card for insertion into an existing cell phone that would thereby allow the phone to function as the controller 105 within the operating environment of the portable event reporting system 100. Further, as described previously in another exemplary embodiment, a cell phone may be tethered or otherwise attached to the controller 105 to function as a transceiver for the system 100.

Although the portable event reporting system 100 has been described in exemplary form with a certain degree of particularity, it should be understood that the present disclosure has been made only by way of example, and that numerous changes and details of construction, as well as the combination and arrangement of parts or

steps may be resorted to without departing from the scope of the invention. Accordingly, the scope of the claims should not be limited by the preferred embodiments set forth in the description, but should be given the broadest interpretation consistent with the description as a whole.

What is claimed is:

1. A method, for providing a system for wireless event monitoring and associated event monitoring services, comprising the steps of:
 - in preparation for sale of the system through a mass-market sales channel, associating a number with the system;
 - associating with the number a specified amount of the services to be deemed prepaid with consumer purchase of the system;
 - subsequent to consumer purchase of the system, receiving from the system a wireless signal conveying the number; and
 - responsive to receiving the number, activating services for the system in accordance with the specified amount of services.
2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the system automatically sends the number to a remote monitoring station upon power up.
3. The method of Claim 1, wherein substantially all components of the system are contained in a package suitable for sale at a retail outlet.
4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the system is contained in a blisterpack-type package.
5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the number conveys identity of the system as unique to all other systems for wireless event reporting provided through the mass-market sales channel.
6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the system comprises a controller, and wherein the number is assigned to the controller during manufacture.

7. The method of Claim 1, wherein the number establishes an operational identity for a controller of the system.

8. The method of Claim 1, wherein the number is generic to a group of systems for wireless event monitoring distributed through the mass-market sales channel, and

wherein responsive to the step of receiving from the system the wireless signal conveying the number, the system is assigned a different, unique operational identity for future communications.

9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the system comprises a cell phone.

10. A method, for providing a wireless event monitoring system that comprises hardware, embedded software, and monitoring service, the method comprising the steps of:

assigning an identity to a controller during manufacture of the controller;
and

offering for sale through a mass-market sales channel a package comprising:

the hardware;
the embedded software; and
the monitoring service,

wherein the hardware comprises the controller; and

using, by the controller, the assigned identity to connect to a wireless network automatically upon power up,

wherein the monitoring service is escrowed for activation of services upon the automatic connection of the controller to the wireless network.

11. The method of Claim 10, wherein the hardware comprises a cell phone that comprises embedded software for detection of reportable events transmitted by wireless event detectors.
12. The method of Claim 10, wherein the controller comprises a cell phone.
13. The method of Claim 10, wherein the controller is further operable to connect to a remote monitoring station over the wireless network based on the assigned identity.
14. The method of Claim 10, further comprising the step of sending a message to the controller to establish an operational identity for the controller in accordance with the assigned identity.
15. The method of Claim 10, wherein the hardware comprises a cell phone configured to accept for insertion a replacement SIM card that enables the cell phone to function as the controller within an operating environment of the wireless event monitoring system.
16. The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of inserting the replacement SIM card within the cell phone, wherein the cell phone with the inserted SIM card is configured to receive signals from wireless event detectors of the wireless event monitoring system.
17. The method of claim 16, wherein the cell phone with the inserted SIM card is configured to send a wireless transmission through a designated alert mechanism upon detection of a reportable event for the wireless event monitoring system.
18. The method of claim 16, wherein the cell phone with the inserted SIM card comprises embedded software for detection of reportable events transmitted by wireless event detectors of the wireless event monitoring system.

19. The method of claim 16, wherein the cell phone with the inserted SIM card has a finite service life period in accordance with a prepayment of service for the wireless event monitoring system.

20. A method, for providing a wireless event monitoring system that comprises hardware, embedded software, and monitoring service, the method comprising the steps of:

assigning an identity to a controller during manufacture of the controller;

offering for sale through a mass-market sales channel a package comprising:

a system comprising the hardware and the embedded software, the hardware comprising the controller; and

the monitoring service,

wherein the monitoring service is escrowed for activation of services upon the automatic connection of the controller to a wireless network; and

upon power up of the controller, automatically connecting the controller to the wireless network using the assigned identity.

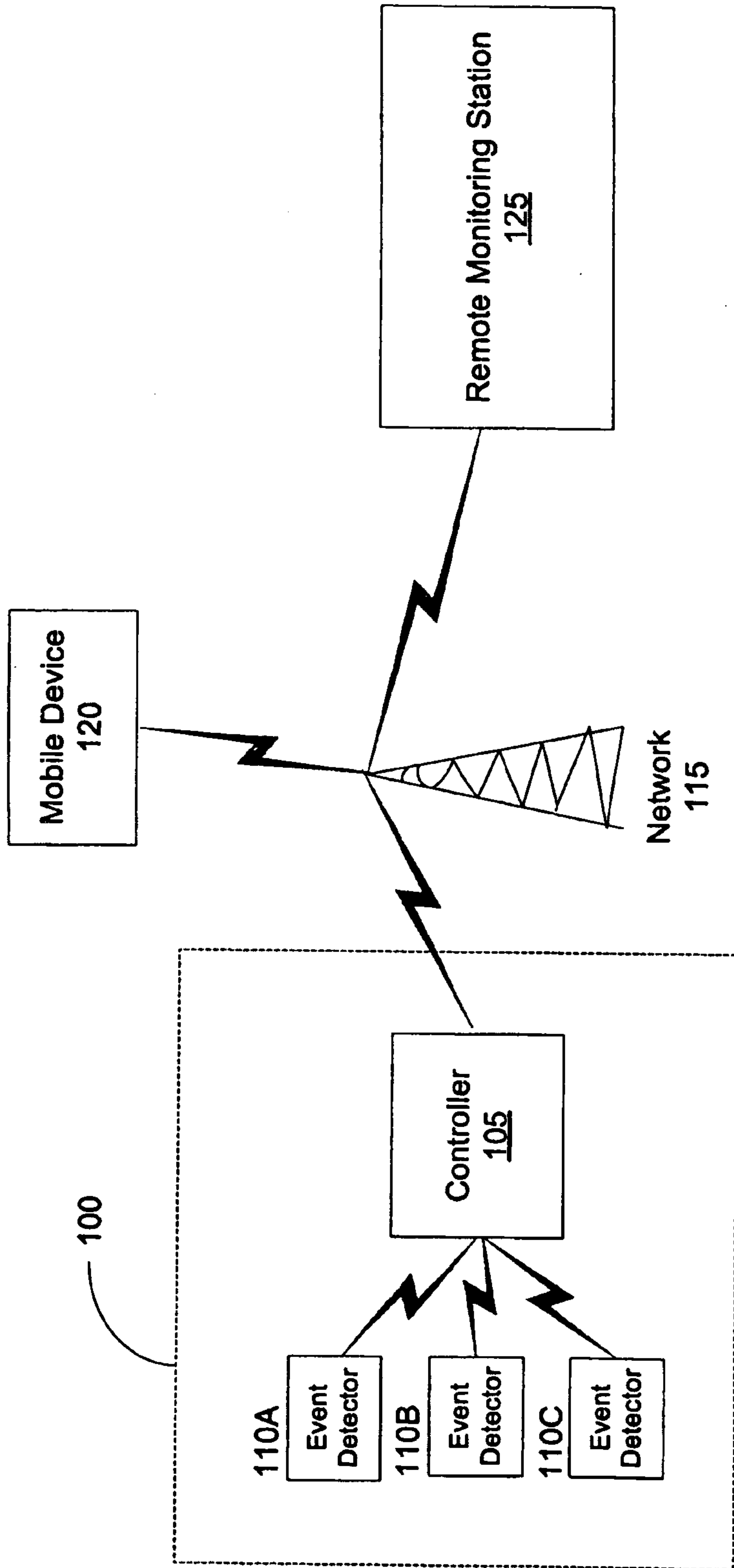


Figure 1

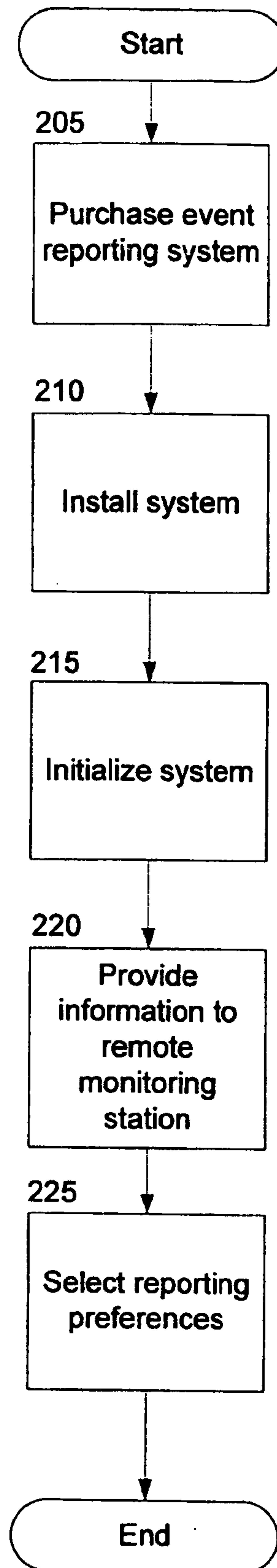
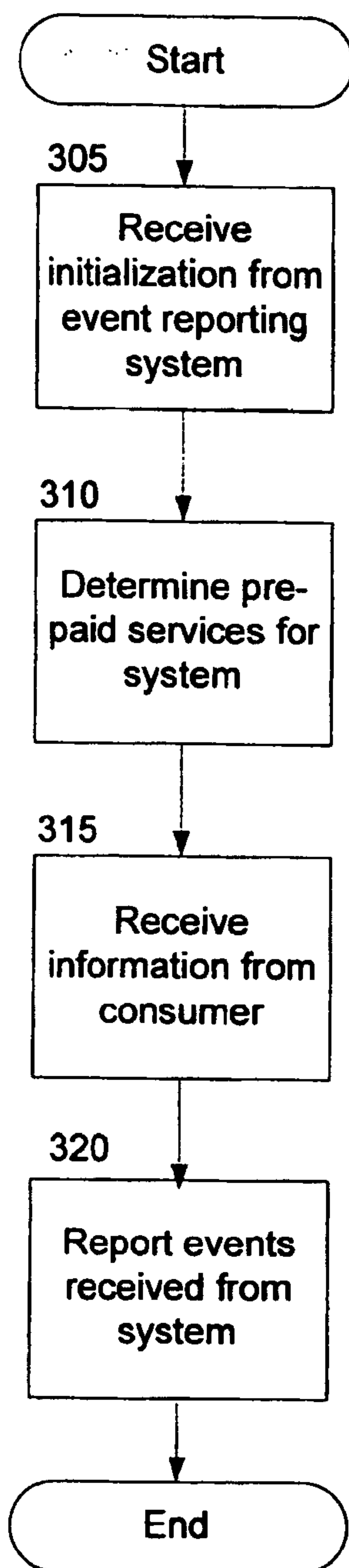


Figure 2

Figure 3



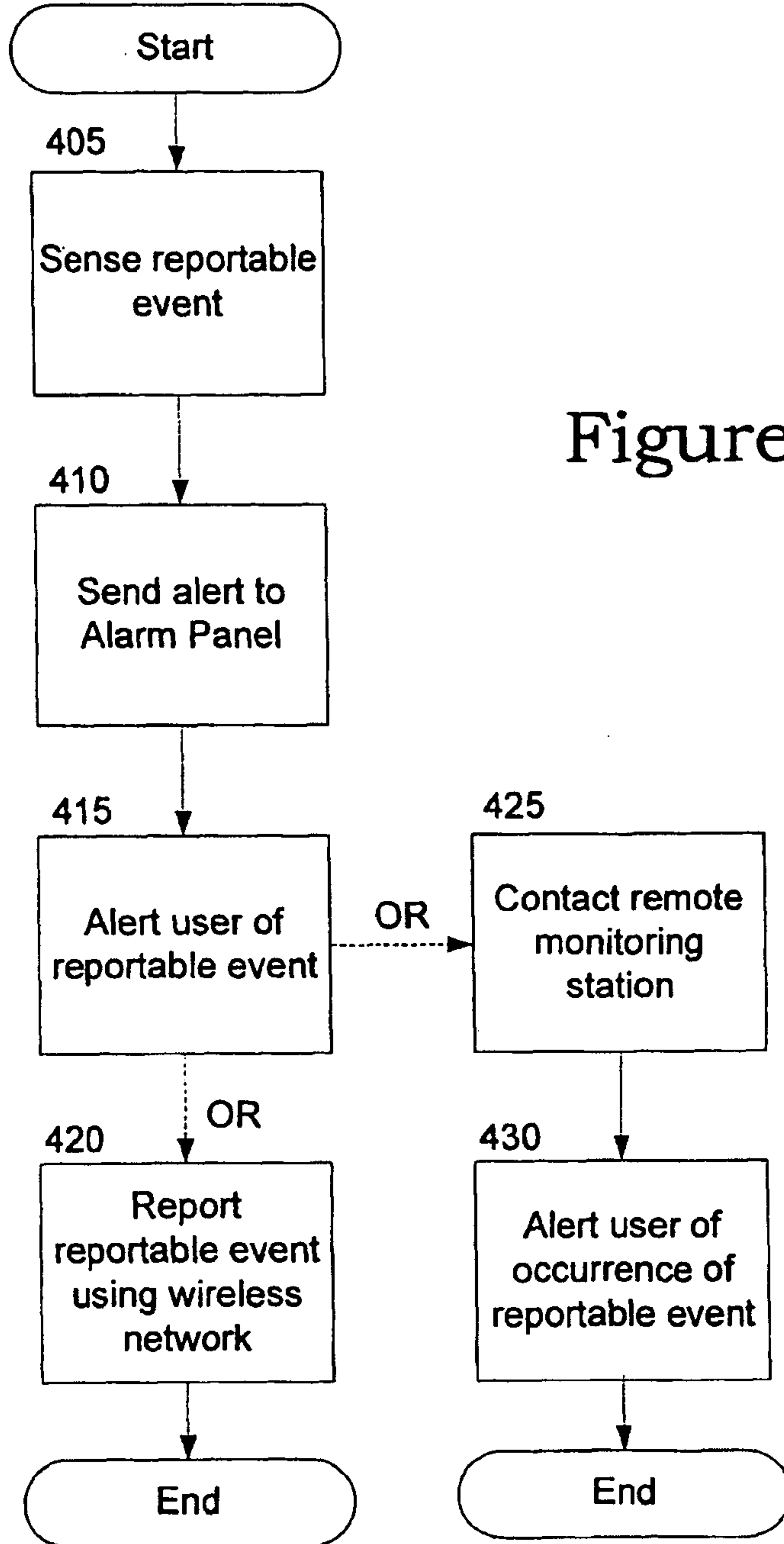


Figure 4

