
	ROSENBERG POLICE DEPARTMENT	
	General Order 7.22 Alarms	
	Effective Date: 05-13-2013	Replaces: G.O. 860
	Approved:  Chief of Police	
	Reference: TBP 7.26	

I. PURPOSE

To thwart crimes in progress, apprehend criminal offenders and protect lives and property, this agency responds to audible and silent alarms of any system. Periodic studies are conducted and actions taken to minimize the number of repeated false alarms.

II. POLICY

Alarm systems provide a specific form of information input to our police communications center. Because they warn of crimes in progress, their importance must not be underestimated. Alarms are usually onsite sensing devices which, when activated, alert a monitoring station by a bell, buzzer or light. There are generally four basic types of alarms with which we deal. Local alarms are commonly used for on-site protection against burglary and emit an audible sound when activated. Central station alarms, when activated, transmit a silent signal to privately owned alarm or security companies. Silent alarms are most commonly used for after-hours intruders and robbery-in-progress signals. Proprietary alarm systems are like central station alarms, except the silent signal is transmitted to an on-site monitoring station which is staffed, owned and operated by the proprietor. Direct connection systems are like central station alarms, except the silent signal is transmitted directly into our communications center. Repeated false alarms, due to either human or equipment error, cause police officers to become complacent about responding to any alarm; and the costs to citizens of our response to false alarms are high in terms of personnel time and equipment usage.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Communications Center

Private companies should be the central alarm stations for most alarms. Only a very limited number of alarms that transmit a signal directly into the agency dispatch center will be allowed. Telecommunications personnel will monitor alarms in the communications center at all times.

B. Commercial Alarm Companies

Telecommunication personnel will dispatch field units when notification is received from a private alarm or security company that an alarm has been activated. Field officers shall be notified whether the alarm is for burglary or hold-up/panic if that information can be obtained.

C. Intrusion

You will notify responding officers if an alarm indicates an unauthorized intrusion and the point of alarm activation on the premises (rear door, warehouse, etc.), but there shall be no radio traffic revealing the name of the private alarm company or type of sensing devices.

D. Robbery

You will notify responding officers if an alarm indicates a robbery-in-progress, but there shall be no radio traffic revealing the name of the private alarm company, or type of activation device.

E. Response to Automatic Dialing Systems

This agency directs individuals who purchase automatic dialing systems that they must "dial" a private alarm or security company--not the police communications center.

F. Handling Automatic Dialed Calls

When an automatic dial call is received in the communications center, field officers will be dispatched and the call handled the same as for commercial alarm companies.

G. Mandatory Reporting

Communication officers will prepare an administrative report of the situation and forward it to the commanding officer of the Support Services Division.

H. Official Notification

The commander or designee of the communications division will call persons responsible for automatic dialed alarms to the police communications center and notify them that their future calls must be routed to a private alarm or security company; we will not respond to future automatic dialed alarms to their business or residence. The department follows up telephone notification with a letter.

I. False Alarms

Police officers often become complacent about responding to any alarm when dealing frequently with repeated false alarms. The costs of repeated false alarms to citizens of our community are high in terms of personnel time and equipment usage.

J. Recording False Alarm Information

Communication officers shall keep a log of all false alarms and document if they were:

- False/weather – weather conditions most likely caused the false alarm; or
- False – Alarm was caused by accidental or intentional means, equipment failure, etc. and no emergency exists. Additional information is included in the narrative of the call card.

K. Limit to Number of False Alarms Warnings

The City Ordinance governing alarms will set an acceptable number of false alarms by any one residence or commercial building. After this number has been met, the patrol division may issue citations.

IV. ALARM TYPES AND RESPONSES

A. Burglary: The dispatcher will assign at least two units to any burglary alarm. The following serve as guidelines for responding to a burglar alarm.

1. A primary officer and back-up officer should be dispatched to all burglary alarms. An on-duty field supervisor or an officer on the scene may modify or cancel the response of other officers as appropriate given circumstances known at the time.
2. Arriving officers will position themselves using all available cover and/or concealment in a manner that allows them to view the perimeter of the business or residence. The first officer on the scene will direct arriving officers to a point on the perimeter.
3. Officers shall check the building from all possible vantage points for any signs of forced entry or unlocked doors/windows. If there is no sign of fresh entry, officers may clear the call and return to service. Officers may wait for a key holder and conduct a building search consistent with the tenets of this directive when no sign of forced entry is found.
4. A minimum of two officers will conduct building searches. A key holder should not be permitted to enter a building until the search is completed unless extenuating circumstances exist requiring their knowledge of the scene to aid in the search.
5. The dispatcher will attempt to locate a key holder whenever fresh entry is found on a business or residence. The dispatcher will advise the key holder

officers will hold the scene for 30 minutes. Officers may wait longer than 30 minutes for a key holder to arrive if it facilitates the investigation.

6. Officers will secure buildings to the best of their ability if no key holder makes the scene. The dispatcher will make a note on the radio log that no key holder responded and the primary officer on the call may place a Close Patrol for the premises.

B. Hold-Up and Panic Alarms: The dispatcher will assign at least two units to a hold-up or panic alarm. The following serve as guidelines for responding to panic or hold-up alarms.

1. If, after having received a robbery/panic alarm call, dispatch receives a call to cancel the alarm, officers should continue their response to the scene anyway. However, the on-duty field supervisor may authorize lowering the response priority when appropriate, given circumstances known at the time.

2. Arriving officers should position themselves using all available cover and/or concealment in a manner that allows them to view the perimeter of business/residence. The first officer on the scene will direct arriving officers to a point on the perimeter.

3. The primary unit should advise the dispatcher when the perimeter is set and request the dispatcher make telephone contact with the resident/employee to determine the validity of the alarm.

4. The dispatcher should request the resident/employee to step outside and talk to officers if informed the alarm is false. The dispatcher will obtain a brief description of the resident/employee and provide it to officers before the resident/employee steps outside. Officers should check the business or residence with the consent of the key holder even after being advised an alarm is false.

5. Officers should assume an alarm is good if the resident/employee refuses to step outside or does not answer the dispatcher's call. However, officers should be cognizant that lone employees may be unable to exit the building if customers are present. Also, invalid residents may be unable or unwilling to come outside. In those instances officers should check the residence or business as closely as possible for danger signs and proceed with appropriate caution in a manner of their discretion. Officers will call for sufficient back-up to maintain the perimeter before making entry into a business or residence if suspects are believed to be inside.

6. If the alarm is on a business, officers will make entry as soon as the perimeter is secured unless there is evidence to believe a barricaded suspect situation exists.

7. If the alarm is on a residence, officers should make every effort to contact the resident/property custodian [including attempts through the alarm company] before making forced entry. Officers will make forced entry only if able to articulate reason(s) to believe a life threatening situation exists [i.e. something seen through a window, signs of entry, information from a neighbor, etc.].

8. Nothing in this section or any other section prohibits officers from taking immediate action to neutralize an active shooter or other imminent threat to life.

C. Other Alarms: Officers from time to time may be requested to check by with the Fire Department on other types of alarms. These alarms may include medical alarms or fire alarms. Officers responding to medical alarms or fire alarms should respond in a Priority 3 response unless otherwise authorized by an appropriate supervisor.

V. ALARM DISPOSITIONS

A. Officers will clear each alarm with the appropriate clearance using the mobile computer system or by advising the dispatcher of the disposition of each alarm. The officer, or the dispatcher when necessary, will note the call disposition on the computerized call for service slip or the radio log.

1. Typical alarm clearances include the following:

- a. False Alarm/Weather Related- Weather related clearances may include weather severe enough to set off alarms and power outages. Equipment malfunction of an alarm system may set off the alarm. Human error such as improper passcode of an authorized person may accidentally set off the alarm.
- b. Report - Alarms can be cleared “report” when an offense has occurred and an offense report is generated.