

VOLUME II, CHAPTER 2. ALARMS

2. ALARMS

(December 2005)

I. POLICY

(County Code, Sec. 9-130)

Officers shall respond to alarm calls subject to the provisions of this directive.

County Code Section 9-131 regulates responsibility for the proper operation and serviceability of alarm systems. It also mandates the imposition of sanctions against those operators having systems that malfunction excessively or are frequently operated negligently.

II. CHECKLIST

Officers shall use caution when responding to any alarm call. Due to the high volume of these calls, complacency may erode the use of sound officer safety tactics. In addition to other officer safety tactics, the following should be considered when approaching the target location:

- ❑ Do not rush to the target location
- ❑ Park away from the target location and approach on foot
- ❑ Attempt to approach the location in a manner that prevents being seen by suspects
- ❑ Watch for fleeing suspect and vehicles during the approach

III. DEFINITIONS

False Alarm: Departmental response to the activation of an alarm for which the responding officer finds no evidence of a criminal offense or attempted criminal offense. False alarms include negligently or accidentally activated signals; signals which are the result of faulty, malfunctioning or improperly installed or maintained

equipment; or signals purposely activated to summon the police in non-emergency situations. Response to an alarm that is cancelled by the alarm user or alarm company prior to the officer's arrival is not a false alarm.

IV. FORMS

- ❑ Commercial Alarm User Permit Registration Form (FARU Form #102)
- ❑ False Alarm Notification (PGC Form #4451)
- ❑ Incident Report (PGC Form #3529)
- ❑ Residential Alarm User Registration Form (FARU Form #103)

V. PROCEDURES

1. False Alarm Notification Pamphlet

Alarm users must register their systems with False Alarm Reduction Unit (FARU) before using them. Failure to register an alarm system is a violation of County Code Sections 9-132 and 134, and is punishable by fine, civil citation, or the denial of police response to future alarms.

A False Alarm Notification pamphlet shall be completed and left at all alarm locations. This procedure shall be followed even if the owner/resident is on the scene.

Officers may provide the business agent with the Commercial Alarm User Permit Registration Form, or the homeowner with the Residential Alarm User Registration Form, or refer the individual to FARU.

2. Alarms at Public Schools

County officers will be dispatched to all alarms at public schools regardless of

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municipal boundaries or the availability of municipal officers.

When responding to alarms at public schools, officers shall determine:

- Whether the facility was entered
- Whether apprehensions were made
- Whether the alarm was caused by a school employee and, if so, that individual's identity

Municipalities serviced by their own police departments will be notified of the type of call and our response.

3. Clearing Alarm Calls

Officers responding to an alarm shall inspect the exterior for a FARU registration sticker. This purple sticker is not the same as the former Burglar Alarm (BA) registration sticker.

Prior to clearing an alarm call, officers shall relay the displayed FARU registration number to the dispatcher. If no FARU registration number is displayed, the dispatcher shall be notified.

False alarms will be cleared "378" with the appropriate suffix:

- C for a commercial alarm
- R for a residential alarm
- S for a school alarm

Whenever an alarm is purposely activated by an operator merely to obtain expeditious police service, the officer shall complete an Incident Report and note FARU in the COPY TO block. The call shall be cleared:

- "578" (with the appropriate suffix)
- False alarm

- Intentionally activated by (provide name)
- Brochure left on scene
- Permit #

Whenever an alarm is activated with no discernable cause (premise appears secure) the call shall be cleared:

- "378" (with the appropriate suffix)
- False alarm
- Cause unknown
- Brochure left on scene
- Permit #

If there is an apparent cause for the alarm, i.e., severe weather conditions, the call shall be cleared:

- "378" (with the appropriate suffix),
- Alarm verified
- Cause unknown but possibly activated by weather conditions
- Brochure left on scene
- Permit #

A response to an alarm cancelled by the alarm user or alarm company prior to the officer's arrival shall not be considered a false alarm. In this instance, it shall be cleared, "100."

When a supervisor determines that police response is unnecessary due to repeated false alarms caused by severe weather or other articulable reasons, the call shall be cleared "178" (with the appropriate suffix).

These clearances will be recorded at PSC and become part of the official record used by FARU to determine liability.

If a supervisor cancels response to an alarm, it shall not be considered a false alarm.

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Alarm calls should be cleared with as much specificity as practical. If an owner responds to the T/A to assist in a premise search and provides an explanation for the cause of the false alarm, the explanation should be given to the dispatcher. Officers may complete an Incident Report for any alarm call.

VI. GOVERNING LEGISLATION & REFERENCE

This General Order addresses:

- ❑ Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Standards 41.2.1, 81.2.13, 82.2.1, 82.2.2

Legislation:

- ❑ County Code, Sections 9-131, 9-132, & 9-134