



# “AWARE” ALARM PROGRAM

**INDEX CODE: 1603.2**  
**EFFECTIVE DATE: 02-18-09**

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## **I. PURPOSE**

The Anne Arundel County Police Department currently participates in a “silent alarm” emergency response system offered through ADT Security Systems. This alarm system is known as the Abused Women’s Active Response Emergency (AWARE). The alarm is offered as a public service to victims of domestic violence who have met certain criteria and have signed a contract/participation agreement. This index code will provide department personnel with procedures that will provide a timely response and to ensure the safety of the participant/victim.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

In 1996, the Anne Arundel County Police Department signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Anne Arundel County State’s Attorney’s Office concerning our agreement to respond to “silent alarms” offered by ADT Security Systems to victims of domestic violence.

## **III. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM**

The AWARE program is administered by the Victim/Witness Center of the Anne Arundel County State’s Attorney’s Office. The installation of the alarms is coordinated by the Department’s representative, who is a member of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council. The Domestic Violence Officer in each patrol district is responsible for maintaining a log of all AWARE alarms in their respective district and notifying their chain of command of a new installation or the deactivation of a previously installed alarm.

### **A. Participants**

Participants for the AWARE program are determined by the State’s Attorney’s Office. Generally, the participants are people at risk of domestic violence with no other means of safety. In all cases, the participants are at risk of imminent danger, have filed a protective order against an alleged defendant, and are willing to prosecute any subsequent violations. Participants sign an agreement, release and waiver of liability and a disclaimer. This alarm works only at the location of the installation. If a participant/victim activates an AWARE alarm, they are expecting a rapid police response. Participants/victims authorize the Anne Arundel County Police Department to use force if necessary to enter the residence to protect the participant/victim and to search for an intruder.

### **B. Installation/Deactivation Protocol**

ADT Security Systems requires that an officer accompany their technician to the participant/victim’s residence and stand by during the installation of the AWARE alarm. In most instances, this assignment will be the responsibility of the Domestic Violence Officer in the district where the installation is to occur. It is the responsibility of this officer to immediately notify his/her commanding officer and a supervisor in the Communications Section of the alarm installation. The Communications Section will make the appropriate caution notes for the address. If an alarm is deactivated, the district Domestic Violence Officer will ensure that the Communications Section is notified and that the caution notes concerning the AWARE alarm are purged.

**IV. RESPONSE TO ALARMS**

The Communications Section and responding officers will adhere to the conditions and priorities established in Index Code 1649, Response Codes, in determining the appropriate response to an AWARE alarm. Patrol supervisors will be notified of an AWARE alarm.

The dispatching of officers to an AWARE alarm will be conducted in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures of the Communications Section. Consideration should be given to the safety of the participant/victim, the safety of the responding officers, the frequency of prior alarms, and the potential for actual violence in determining whether additional units should be dispatched. An officer who believes that a participant/victim may be in serious danger is authorized to use force to enter the premises to protect the participant/victim and family and to search for an intruder.

**V. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

An incident report is required whenever force is used to enter a residence where an AWARE alarm has been activated.

**VI. PROPONENT UNIT:** *Patrol Services* Bureau.

**VII. CANCELLATION:** This directive cancels Index Code 1603.2, dated 07-01-07.