



# ALARMS AT BUSINESSES & PRIVATE RESIDENCES

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## **I. POLICY**

It is the policy of the Anne Arundel County Police Department to respond to *all* burglary and robbery *alarm signals* at businesses, *government owned properties* and private residences in order to deter crime in cases of attempts or apprehend perpetrators when a burglary or robbery has been committed.

## **II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this directive is to provide guidelines for responding to *received alarm signals*. *This directive includes procedures for enforcement of current laws and ordinances relating to false alarms.*

## **III. DEFINITIONS**

### **A. Alarm Administrator**

*A person designated by the Chief of Police to administer the provisions of Anne Arundel County's False Alarm Reduction laws.*

### **B. Alarm Business**

*A person who provides alarm services.*

### **C. Alarm Monitor**

*An alarm business that provides the alarm service of receiving alarm signals from alarm sites for the purpose of making dispatch requests.*

### **D. Alarm Services**

*The installation, maintenance, inspection, sale, service, or repair of alarm systems. Alarm Services includes receiving and monitoring alarm signals from alarm sites and making dispatch requests.*

### **E. Alarm Signal**

*The activation, either manual or automatic, of an alarm system.*

### **F. Alarm Site**

*A single premises or location served by one or more alarm systems that may be composed of multiple zones.*

**G. Alarm System**

*A device or series of devices at an alarm site, including those interconnected with radio frequency signals, that is designed to discourage crime by emitting or transmitting a remote or local audible, visual, or electronic signal indicating a criminal activity, and that is intended to summon a response from the police department.*

*Alarm system does not include an alarm installed on a vehicle unless the vehicle is permanently located at an alarm site, or an alarm that is designed to alert only the inhabitants of an alarm site that does not have a sounding device that can be heard on the exterior of the alarm site.*

**H. Alarm User**

*A person who operates an alarm system or causes an alarm system to be operated.*

*Alarm user includes a tenant who operates an alarm system or causes an alarm system to be operated in the area leased by the tenant.*

**I. Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD)**

*A computer system into which police personnel enter dispatch request information, including the date, time, and location of the alarm site, that is linked to police patrol cars, and into which police personnel responding to the alarm site enter the time and the outcome of the response.*

**J. Cancellation**

*The process by which a dispatch request is rescinded when an alarm monitor notifies the police department that there is no crime requiring response to an alarm site.*

**K. Dispatch Request**

*A notification to the police department that an alarm signal has been activated for the purpose of summoning a response to the alarm site.*

**L. False Alarm**

*An alarm signal that results in a dispatch request that is not canceled prior to the arrival of police personnel at the alarm site, where police personnel find no evidence of criminal activity or attempted criminal activity.*

*False alarm includes an alarm signal that is activated negligently or accidentally, that is the result of faulty, malfunctioning, or improperly installed or maintained equipment, or that is intentionally activated to summon police personnel for a non-emergency situation.*

*False alarm includes an alarm signal that is activated as a result of weather or power outage conditions, unless there is visible evidence of severe conditions directly affecting the alarm site, such as a tree or object striking a building or a window.*

*False alarm includes each separate false alarm occurring in one calendar day at a single alarm site.*

**IV. COMMUNICATIONS SECTION**

*When a dispatch request is received from an Alarm Business, Alarm Monitor, or Alarm Services call takers will ascertain the nature of the alarm and enter such information into the CAD system. Dispatchers will follow procedures as set forth in the Communications Section SOP for such calls. The dispatcher will enter the final disposition into the CAD notes.*

*CAD system records must include:*

- \* date and time of receipt of the dispatch request;*
- \* location of the alarm site;*
- \* area of the alarm site, if applicable;*
- \* alarm registration number for the alarm site;*
- \* police personnel dispatch time and arrival time at the alarm site;*
- \* identification of the responsible alarm monitor; and*
- \* disposition of the response.*

**V. RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESPONDING OFFICERS**

A. Officers dispatched to or coming upon the scene of an activated alarm will, if not dispatched, notify Communications of the situation and request a backup unit. Officers must not allow the frequency of false alarms to affect their attitude when handling such incidents, and must observe caution in every case.

B. If a break-in is suspected, under no circumstances will a lone officer enter a building to search for the perpetrator. No entry or search will be made until the arrival of sufficient assistance. The only exception to this procedure will be a search conducted by a member of the K-9 Unit employing the use of a dog.

C. The officer will have Communications attempt to notify the owner or a representative of the business or home and advise the individual that an alarm has been activated and request their presence at the scene to terminate the alarm and to allow the entry of police personnel to verify the security of the premises.

D. A thorough search of the area and premises must be made by the officer and all facts relative to the incident, including the notification and a response of the owner or representative, will be recorded in a report should the alarm lead to the discovery of a crime.

E. If the premises appear to be secure, and the estimated time of arrival of the owner/representative is lengthy or unknown, a patrol supervisor may authorize the officer to clear the scene pending the arrival of the owner/representative

F. In the event that *no criminal activity is found, an on-scene* officer will indicate to the dispatcher that the alarm was false due to the following:

**1. Non-Criminal**

- a. No evidence of attempted or actual criminal activity*
- b. Faulty*
- c. Malfunctioning*
- d. Improperly installed or maintained equipment*
- e. Related to weather*
- f. Related to a power outage*

**2. Intentional – Activated to summon police personnel for a non-emergency situation.**

**3. Exempt - evidence of a severe condition exists or was police initiated**

- a. A tree or other object striking the building or window*
- b. Power outages lasting more than 24-hours*
- c. Police or fire activated to gain entry for emergency condition*
- d. Police activated while checking open door, etc.*

G. If the alarm is purposely activated to summon police for a non-emergency situation, the *on-scene* officer may issue a criminal citation to the person who intentionally activated the alarm. The charge will be:

*Annotated Code of Maryland CR 9-608 - Intentional False Alarm/Burglary Robbery*

*CR 9-608 is a misdemeanor punishable by up to 90 days imprisonment or fines not exceeding \$500 or both.*

*A police report will be completed and a copy must be forwarded to the Alarm Administrator/Crime Prevention Section.*

**VI. CENTRAL RECORDS SECTION**

Central Records personnel will final-type all alarms according to established procedures.

**VII. CRIME PREVENTION SECTION**

1. *With the exception of intentional non-emergency alarm activation capable of being charged under Annotated Code of Maryland CR 9-608 - Intentional False Alarm/Burglary*, the Crime Prevention Section will be solely responsible for the issuance of civil/criminal citations concerning false alarms. They will establish the criteria for the issuance of civil and criminal charges relative to *Anne Arundel County's False Alarm Reduction Law (Title 5, Section 12 or the Annotated Code of Maryland, Alarm Systems (Title 9, Subtitles 6, sections 607-611)*.
2. The *Alarm Administrator*/Crime Prevention Section will be designated to:
  - a. *Prepare, maintain or generate pertinent* reports of false alarms.
  - b. *Administer the False Alarm Reduction program.*
  - c. *Register or provide registration information to:*
    1. *Alarm Businesses*
    2. *Alarm Monitors*
    3. *Alarm Services*
    4. *Alarm Users*
  - d. *Receive and review civil fine penalty appeals.*
  - e. *Suspend or deny alarm system registrations*
  - f. *Receive and review suspended/denied alarm system appeals*
  - g. *Liaison with subcontracted services related to the enforcement of False Alarm Reduction laws.*
  - h. *Appear at hearings, in court or before other boards as necessary*
3. The *Alarm Administrator* will submit *a monthly report to the Commander of the Community Relations Division detailing the past month's enforcement, registration and review activity.*
4. *The Commander of the Community Relations Division will report False Alarm Reduction information in the Monthly Report*

**VII. PROPONENT UNIT:** *Community Relations Division.*

**VIII. CANCELLATION:** This directive cancels Index Code 1812, dated 02-26-09.