

# **WEST PALM BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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## **III-5 ALARM RESPONSE**

**EFFECTIVE: 01/01/2005**

**CALEA Standards: 81.2.13**

**CFA Standards: N/A**

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**I. POLICY:** The West Palm Beach Police Department will respond promptly to all alarms to ensure the safety of its citizens. The West Palm Beach Police Department will ensure that alarm responses and their subsequent investigation are conducted in a safe, organized and thorough manner. The West Palm Beach Police Department will not physically monitor privately owned residential, commercial or other types of hold-up or intrusion alarms. Department personnel will be dispatched through the Dispatch Operations Center or with an on-scene response to officer or citizen-initiated audible alarms.

## **II. DEFINITIONS:**

A. Alarm System - Any device that emits, transmits, or relays a signal intended to summon emergency personnel such as police, fire, EMS, to a specific scene. Alarm systems may be installed on vehicles, structures, or medically challenged individuals associated with a specific location.

B. Silent Alarm - An alarm that does not give an audible tone or sound when activated.

C. Audible Alarm - An alarm that sounds aloud with tone or sound when activated.

D. Fire Alarm - An alarm which sounds aloud when manually activated or when smoke or fire has been detected.

E. Smoke Alarm - An alarm with audible tone that is activated by the presence of smoke.

F. Medical Alarm - An alarm that is activated when a medical emergency arises.

G. Occupied Premises - Any structure with any person(s) inside.

H. Unoccupied Premises - Any structure with no person(s) inside.

I. False Alarm - Means an alarm dispatch or other response by the West Palm Beach Police Department when the responding officer(s) finds no evidence of a criminal offense or attempted criminal offense after having completed an investigation of the site.

### 1. Exceptions to the Definition -

a. Alarms occurring as a result of lightning, wind or other meteorological event where there is clear evidence of damage to the alarm system.

b. Disruption of the telephone circuit beyond the control of the alarm operator or its agents, verified by written communication from the phone company.

c. An electrical power disruption or failure in excess of four hours.

J. Responder - A designated person(s) who is required to respond to the site of the alarm if requested by the West Palm Beach Police Department.

## **III. RESPONSE PROCEDURE:**

A. Panic or Hold up Alarms - Dispatch Operations will relay the following information for responding units.

1. Is the alarm audible or silent?

2. Complete and specific location of the alarm,

a. address,

b. business or

- c. resident's name or
- d. area covered by the alarm.

4. Responding party and estimated time of arrival (ETA)?

5. Inside contact phone numbers, if requested

6. If a Hold up Alarm is determined to be an actual robbery, field units will be notified immediately.

B. Approach – **SECTION DELETED AS IT SHOWS DEPLOYMENT**

C. Making Contact – **SECTION DELETED AS IT SHOWS DEPLOYMENT**

D. Burglary or Audible Alarms – **SECTION DELETED AS IT SHOWS DEPLOYMENT**

3. Signs of Entry or Intrusion - **SECTION DELETED AS IT SHOWS DEPLOYMENT**

E. Dispatch Operations – will obtain the following information for responding units.

1. Complete and specific location of the alarm;

- a. Address,
- b. business, or
- c. resident's name and
- d. area covered by the alarm.

2. Confirmation of burglary or audible\_signal.

3. Responding party's ETA?

4. Complainant or contact Information.

E. Security Alarms at the Police Administration Building - **SECTION DELETED AS IT SHOWS DEPLOYMENT**

F. Security Alarms at Off-Site Police or Government Locations

1. Off-site location alarms may be monitored by a commercial alarm monitoring company selected by the City. Alarm response at these locations will be dictated by the type of alarm being reported.

G. Alarm Cancellation - A patrol supervisor shall have the discretion to cancel an alarm provided the alarm has signaled multiple false activations during a shift or an officer has previously verified the alarm as false. Under no circumstances shall a hold-up, medical or panic alarm be canceled.

1. A patrol supervisor shall have the discretion to instruct officers to respond to any security alarm, regardless of the circumstance, if responding is deemed to be in the best interest of public safety.

2. Silent panic alarms under normal circumstances will not be cancelled. Upon receiving a request to cancel, it will be necessary for a unit to respond and verify the cancellation.

- a. Residential developments that have their own security force and monitor alarms in the development may respond to alarms and check the residence. Such security forces may verify the cancellation based on their response to the scene.

3. Audible Alarms – Alarm companies will be considered a representative of their customer.

- a. Upon receiving a cancellation of any audible alarm from the alarm company, the call taker receiving the call will obtain the representatives company name and ID. Upon receipt of valid

information for cancellation, the call taker will enter all documentation into CAD and notify the appropriate dispatcher of the cancellation. **SECTION DELETED AS IT SHOWS DEPLOYMENT**

H Responder Notification -In all instances officers on-scene shall request Dispatch Operations make contact with the responder and notify communications personnel upon the responder's arrival.

#### IV. DISPATCH OPERATIONS:

A. Dispatch Operations will advise responding officers of the information received. Dispatch operations will ensure that one primary and one backup unit is dispatched for each alarm. The responding officer or dispatch operations personnel will enter CAD information for each call for service.

1. False alarms shall be cleared with a disposition of "A" and a cad entry will be completed describing the circumstances for the alarm activation.
2. Alarm call canceled prior to arrival shall be cleared with a disposition of "PER" cancel per complainant and a cad entry will be completed.
3. Alarm calls occurring as a result of weather conditions shall be cleared with a disposition of "WEA" weather and a cad entry will be completed.
4. Alarm calls canceled at the discretion of a supervisor shall be cleared with a disposition of "Z" other and a cad entry will be completed.

B. Actual Robbery "in progress" - If the coded response indicates a robbery in progress, Dispatch Operations shall immediately inform the responding units.

C. Actual robbery "just occurred" - If the coded response indicates robbery just occurred, then Dispatch Operations shall notify the following:

1. If the telephone call to the business/ residence is unanswered or the phone removed from the cradle and there is no response, Dispatch shall handle the alarm as a robbery "in progress" until otherwise directed.
2. If the robbery is reported via telephone, Dispatch will keep the caller on the line and obtain all appropriate information.
3. Dispatch will broadcast available information to responding units via radio.
4. When the first responding unit arrives at the scene, Dispatch shall place the station on "Emergency Traffic Only" status, until such status is rescinded by units at the scene.
5. Dispatch shall obtain via telephone, the clothing and physical descriptions of the representative who will be meeting them and relay the information to the responding units.
6. Dispatch shall instruct the designated representative to exit the business/ residence from a specific doorway and meet with the police according to instructions.
7. If the alarm is received after business hours, Dispatch shall notify the subscriber or representative to respond to the scene.

D. Alarm Permits - Dispatch operations will annotate in the Immediate CAD read-out if the business/residence has a valid alarm permit on file.

1. When an alarm is received and it is determined that no valid permit is on file:
  - a. Officers will respond to all alarms until it is determined whether or not the business/residence is properly permitted.
  - b. Response to non-permitted alarms will be provided by the West Palm Beach Police Department and will not exceed two responses per calendar year.

**V. REFERENCE:**

- City of West Palm Beach Ordinance # 3609-02
- SOP # III-4 Law Enforcement Response
- U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, False Burglar Alarms by Rana Sampson

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**Delsa R. Bush, Chief of Police**

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Job Title Task Files: SWAT Officers, Shift Commander, Patrol Supervisors, Patrol Officers, Dispatch Operations