

	<b>LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT</b> <b>Ardmore, Pennsylvania</b>	
	<b>Policy 3.10.1</b>	
Subject:		Distribution:
<b>Alarm Activations</b>		<b>All Personnel</b>
Date of Issue:	Expiration Date:	Rescinds:
<b>06-01-2014</b>	<b>Until Amended or Rescinded</b>	<b>Directive: 98-05, 98-67</b>
References:		
<b>CALEA: N/A; PLEAC: N/A</b>		
By Authority of:		
		<b>Superintendent of Police</b>

## **POLICY**

When a report of an activated security alarm is received, Communications Center personnel shall monitor the event and make any emergency contact notifications. At the conclusion of the incident, the telecommunicator shall complete an alarm activation report in ALERT utilizing the code 4453 and any other secondary codes that apply. In the event the incident is a verified crime, the responding officer shall complete the initial report and the telecommunicator shall submit a supplemental report detailing the alarm information.

Units responding to the scene will treat each alarm activation as a bona fide felony in progress, and proceed in accordance with the proper departmental procedures. Upon arrival at the scene, personnel will determine if a felony did occur or if one is in progress and take the appropriate action.

In those cases involving verified or accidental alarms, the responding officer will make a thorough investigation of the circumstances and supplement the Alarm Activation Report that the telecommunicator entered into ALERT.

## **PROCEDURE**

If the activation was due to an unusual circumstance, i.e., an electrical power failure in the neighborhood, severe local storm conditions, utility workers in the neighborhood, highway accident, etc., no enforcement action will be taken and an Alarm Activation Report will not be necessary. The on-duty Patrol Sergeant shall make that determination as to whether to “weather” the alarms or to make any other alarm activation non-reportable.

- A.** The investigating officer/communications center personnel shall identify and include in the Alarm Activation Report the type of alarm system. There are four basic categories of security systems.

1. Central Station Protective System: A protective system operated privately for customers by a firm which maintains trained operators in attendance at all times who have the responsibility upon receipt of an emergency message to relay that message to the Communications Center of the Police Department.
  2. Local Alarm Service: An alarm that can be seen or heard only at the protected premises.
  3. Police Department Alarm: A system that terminates in the Communications Center of the Police Department, either directly to an alarm panel or via a telephone dialer.
  4. Proprietary Alarm Service: An alarm in which a private guard force monitors the system, responds to all alarms, and notifies the Police Department only when police services are needed.
- B.** With regard to the investigations of non-burglary alarm activations, the alarm ordinance provides for a 15-minute shut-off requirement on audible alarms. When it is evident that an alarm system does not have this feature, the responding officer will indicate that in a supplemental report. Enforcement action will be taken after the first 15-minute shut-off violation.
- C.** An Incident Notification Card ([AUX-19](#)) will be left at the scene of every reportable alarm activation when the owner of the property is not present. In those cases when it cannot be handed directly to an employee, baby-sitter, visitor, etc., it should be left in a conspicuous location, not affected by weather conditions. The Notification Card must be filled in completely.
- D.** The Communications Center personnel shall be responsible for maintaining the alarm activation information in ALERT for each activation.
- E.** When a call is received stating that the alarm was accidental and indicating that there is no need for police response, an officer will respond and verify the alarm. An alarm activation report shall be completed by communications personnel and the alarm activation coded as “non-billable.” The verifying officer shall supplement the alarm report and enter the verified information. On-site verifications by officers are required for all bank alarms.
- F.** This section has been redacted for officer safety purposes.
- G.** In those cases where there is no permit number, Communications Center personnel shall assign a permit number in the ALERT system. New alarm registrations shall be completed by communications personnel and the completed form shall be forwarded to the Finance Department via inter-office mail.

- H. "No-Fault" and "Verified" activations are not to be counted as activations. A major storm condition in the Township or a section of same may be carried as "No-Fault." The Patrol Supervisor will determine when the weather conditions constitute a no-fault situation.
- I. In those cases where a taped message is garbled, or not clearly intelligible, the Officer in Charge of the Communications Center and the Auxiliary Services Commander are to be notified via e-mail and will take action to have this situation corrected.

### **FIRE ALARM ACTIVATIONS**

It is the policy of the Police Department to respond to all fire alarm activations. Upon receiving a notification of a fire alarm, the dispatched Officer shall respond to the location of the call and thoroughly investigate the call and report his/her findings to Dispatch.

- A. If there is any indication of a fire the officer shall immediately initiate an evacuation of the property and assist with scene control. The officer shall remain on scene until the fire department resumes, or is relieved by another officer.
- B. Fire Chiefs of responding agencies have the authority to take fire alarms out of service because their investigation reveals that the alarm was caused by a fault in the system.
- C. Once an alarm is placed out of service, the Deputy Chief conducts a follow-up investigation to eliminate the fault and place the system back on line. It is not practical to send the on-call Fire Marshal out on every subsequent activation, therefore, the following is to be adhered to by police personnel when an activation of an out-of-service fire alarm is received:
  - 1. An officer only will then be dispatched to the activation.
  - 2. On arrival, the assigned officer will make a thorough visual check to ensure that no fire exists and report his/her findings to Dispatch.
  - 3. In any event, where a thorough investigation cannot be accomplished, or the officer is uncertain of the circumstances, a supervisor is to be notified and a decision made for either the commitment of a fire company or the notification of the on-duty Fire Marshal.

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