

## CAMBRIDGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

**Title:** *ALARM RESPONSE*

**Procedure: 4.401**

**Date Issued:**

**Revised:**

### **PURPOSE:**

To establish guidelines for a safe and effective response to burglar and holdup alarms.

To develop a deployment plan for response to alarm calls.

To provide for the review of alarm calls.

### **POLICY:**

The Department encourages the use of burglar and holdup alarms to better assist in apprehending criminal offenders. Officers should respond to alarm calls in a safe, realistic manner keeping in mind the high propensity of false alarms, and the potential tactical problems involved if the alarm is bonafide.

### **PROCEDURE:**

1. Generally, two (2) units will be dispatched to a burglar alarm call. However consideration should be given to time of day, day of week, the number of recent false alarms at that location and availability of personnel.

2. Responding officers shall use appropriate vehicular warning devices when responding to the scene, but the siren should not be used within the hearing range of the reported alarm if possible.

3. All alarms will be considered holdup alarms during normal business hours. After normal business hours they will be considered burglar alarms.

4. When arriving at the scene of a burglar alarm, the first unit will generally make a cursory check at the front of the business and then go to the rear of the building and park so the rear and side can

be watched. If an open door or window is discovered, the officer will wait for the second unit. The second unit arriving will park near the front of the building. The check of the exterior of the building should be made after both units have arrived at the scene. The officer(s) should check all exterior doors, windows, and openings for evidence of entry.

5. Generally when arriving at a residential alarm, the first unit should park as near as possible to the residence without being conspicuous and attempt to get a view of the most logical escape route. If an open door or window is observed, the officer will wait for the second unit. Upon arrival of the second unit, both officers should approach the residence simultaneously to check the house.

6. After the responding units have arrived on the scene and the outside of the commercial establishment or residence has been checked and no signs of tampering or forced entry can be found, the owner or manager will be contacted and given the opportunity to check the interior of the building.

7. If after an alarm is received by communications the alarm subscriber calls to say they caused an accidental alarm, the communications dispatcher will so advise the responding units. Upon arrival, if the occupants are known to the responding officer, this will suffice. If they are not known to the responding officer, they must be able to identify themselves. The first officer on the scene may advise communications to have the second unit disregard.

***HOLD-UP ALARMS AT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS***

1. When a holdup alarm is received the dispatcher will broadcast bank alarm at, giving the name and address of the bank. The first and second unit on the scene will be designated as the primary and secondary unit. The on duty Supervisor will respond to the scene.

2. Responding officers shall use appropriate vehicular warning devices when approaching the scene, but the siren will not be used within the hearing range of the reported alarm if possible.

3. The first unit on the scene will state their position when they announce their arrival. Other responding units will likewise provide their locations and complete the outer perimeter, covering all entrances and exits. Units should attempt to locate a site where they can observe the business while keeping themselves and their vehicles out of sight. Officers should be mindful that other offenders may be located outside and away from the business. A cursory check of the surrounding vicinity during arrival should be made to note persons or vehicles near the business.

4. Upon securing the perimeter, the primary officer will notify the dispatcher of apparent status. The officer will attempt to determine if a robbery is in progress by observing the exterior and interior of the building. The dispatcher will call the financial institution to determine why the alarm was sounded. If there is a false alarm, the manager (or official) will exit the building and talk with the officer. Officers will maintain their positions until they are advised the alarm is false. In the event the manager or official does not exit the building, it should be assumed that a robbery is in progress. Responding officers will not enter the business unless directed to do so by the Supervisor. If the offenders are still at the scene, any apprehension efforts should be made after they have exited the business to avoid a hostage situation. If no offenders are apparent, it may be that they have left and locked the employees and customers in the vault or other room. No one is to go in

until directed to do so by a Staff Officer or Supervisor.

5. All radio traffic during the incident will be such that no mention of key procedures is made. After a perimeter has been established by the primary and secondary units, and the on duty Supervisor is on the scene, the dispatcher will call the financial institution and ask to speak to the first person on the alarm response list, kept on file in the dispatch center. The dispatcher should ask for the person by name and not identify themselves as police employees. If the first person is not at the bank the operator should ask for the next person on the list. When contact is made with an individual on the list the dispatcher will ask for the description of the subject and ask them to meet the officer outside. If the proper response is received, the dispatcher will advise the responding units of the apparent false alarm and instruct the employee to follow established procedures. If the proper answers are not transmitted by the bank employee, the dispatcher will then advise the patrol units that this alarm should be considered as a robbery in progress with the offenders still inside the building. Additional units should be dispatched as required.

6. If an actual robbery has occurred and the offender has left the bank, the bank employee will lock the door. They will unlock the door only to uniform police personnel. No police personnel will enter the building unless under the direction of the Supervisor. Once inside the bank, the officers will secure the scene and broadcast appropriate information. The FBI notified as soon as possible. Secondary units should begin searching for the offender(s) and check close areas where a secondary getaway car may have been picked up and the involved vehicle abandoned.

7. If it is a false alarm, the Supervisor will cancel the alarm by broadcasting "false alarm at" giving the bank name and address. All alarms will be considered bonafide until proven otherwise.

***HOLDUP ALARM AT A NON FINANCIAL INSTITUTION***

1. Officers will respond in fundamentally the same manner as for financial institutions.

2. Employees of other, non-financial businesses will use the same procedures as financial institutions, when applicable.

***ALARM RECORDS***

1. The Emergency Response Team Supervisor and the Criminal Investigation Division Supervisor will annually review and update all financial institution tactical response plans as well as all hold-up alarms that are activated to ensure proper procedures on the part of bank employees were followed and assist bank management in any way to correct any inadequacies.