



Sheridan Police Department  
Policies and Procedures  
28.14  
Chapter 28 – Call Response  
Section 14 – Alarm Response

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Signature:

The department recognizes that monitoring the status of private alarm systems is a function best performed by alarm companies. Therefore, the Sheridan Police Department will not monitor private security alarm systems. The department will typically respond to alarms that are reported to the communications center.

**28.14.1 Notification of an Alarm**

- A. When an alarm is received, the communications technician should obtain all pertinent information and dispatch two (2) units to the alarm location.
- B. The communications technician should not attempt to make contact with anyone at the location of the alarm (during business hours) or a responsible party (after hours) until requested to do so by an officer.
- C. If the telephone call to the alarm location goes unanswered, responding units shall be notified. If answered, the technician will have a responsible person meet the officer outside the business at a location specified by the officer and provide a description of the person to the officer.

**28.14.2 Response**

- A. General Response Procedures
  - 1. Unless otherwise directed by a supervisor, two (2) units will respond to alarm calls.
  - 2. Officers who are assigned to an alarm will respond using caution, being aware of vehicular and pedestrian traffic along the route they are taking.
  - 3. Officers should use emergency equipment basing the decision on the following factors:
    - a. Location in relation to the incident;
    - b. Traffic conditions, weather conditions, time of day. Officers should be aware that at night the emergency lights are visible from great distances and their approach could be detected;
    - c. The possibility that an emergency approach will warn the offender and cause him or her to escape or take hostages.
    - d. The likely validity of the alarm based on the totality of the circumstances
  - 4. Officers shall approach the location with caution considering safety of the public and themselves.
  - 5. Officers should note any unusual vehicles or persons in the area of the alarm.
  - 6. Officers should park in a location near the alarm, but that allows for a concealed approach.
- B. Commercial Burglar Alarms (during normal business hours):

1. When the communications center receives a burglar alarm during the hours that a business is generally open, the communication technician will notify the responding units.
2. The responding units should normally proceed to the location of the alarm in a non-emergent manner. This does not preclude officers from responding in a more expeditious manner based upon the particular circumstances surrounding the alarm.
3. Officers responding to the burglar alarm should ensure that their response is properly planned and executed so that the safety of officers and innocent persons is not unnecessarily jeopardized.
4. Responding officers should be alert during the approach to the location for suspicious persons or vehicles.
5. Responding officers should notify the communication technician of any suspicious activities or vehicles in the vicinity.
6. Appropriate actions shall be initiated by responding officers when suspicious circumstances are observed either by noting a license plate number, persons' descriptions, or field contact with the suspicious person(s) or vehicle(s).
7. Responding officers should approach the building in a tactically sound manner. The officers should attempt to approach the scene of the alarm without exposing themselves to the potential suspects.
8. Responding officers will normally not enter the building until a person responsible for the building has met them outside of the business at a location to be determined by the responding officers.
9. If the communications technician has contacted the business and no one arrives in a reasonable time, an officer should consider the alarm to be a robbery in progress.
10. If an employee of the business speaks with an officer, the officer shall ascertain the status inside. The officer shall not rely solely on the employee saying that the alarm is false. The officers entering the business will ensure that no robbery or other crime is taking place.

C. Commercial Burglar Alarms (after hours)

1. If a burglary alarm is received after the hours that a business would normally be open, responding officers may respond with the use of emergency equipment however consideration should be given to turning it off within sight or sound distance from the alarm.
2. If the alarm is after hours, officers should cautiously check the outside of the business for signs of forced entry or open doors. All possible entry or exit areas should be checked. If there is no forced entry or open doors, the officer should request that the communications technician contact the responsible persons for the business to allow entry for a building search.
3. If there are signs of forced entry, or the officer finds that the building is unsecured, the officer should immediately take a position of cover and notify the supervisor to request additional personnel as needed. Depending on the nature of the incident and the circumstances found at the location, the supervisor may dispatch additional officers or a K-9 team to assist with the search and apprehension.
4. If there is forced entry or open doors, the officer should request that the communications technician contact the responsible persons for the building to grant

permission for a building search and, if tactically appropriate, to facilitate entry for the search.

5. Officers will search the interior of the building for any signs of criminal activity.

D. Residential Burglar Alarms

1. When a residential burglar alarm is received by the police department, officers will be dispatched.
2. Officers responding to the scene will obey all traffic regulations and will not use emergency equipment unless there is secondary information that a break in is actually occurring.
3. Upon arrival, officers will look for evidence of a break in and if none exists, attempt to contact the property owner.
4. Residences will only be searched when:
  - a. There is evidence of a break in such as forced entry; or
  - b. The property owner requests it.

E. Robbery/Panic Alarms

1. Officers dispatched to panic alarms should respond as expediently as possible without unnecessarily endangering the officers or the public or alerting perpetrators.
2. Officers should utilize sound tactics when approaching the location of the panic alarm.
3. Officers should be alert during the approach for suspicious persons or vehicles.
4. The first officer to arrive on the scene will assume initial command responsibilities. He or she will disseminate suspect information, if available, and will direct other officers to locations where they can begin observation. Initial deployment should be done covertly. All units arriving at the scene should take a position which is least likely to be detected by the suspect or suspects.
5. If observation of the alarm location indicates that there is a robbery in progress, officers should maintain a covert position in order to minimize the chance that the suspect becomes desperate and takes hostages. To further minimize this chance, officers should remain in a covert position until the suspect(s) have moved far enough away from the building's entrance to negate the chance that the suspect could return inside.
6. In normal circumstances, officers should not enter the business but should have communications call the business. Once the communications technician contacts the business, they will attempt to speak with a responsible party and determine if the alarm is legitimate.
7. If the communications technician is advised that it was a false alarm, the communications technician will obtain the name, title and the clothing description of the employee and will relay this information to the primary officer. The communications technician will advise the employee to meet one of the responding officers at the location that the officer designates.
8. If it is determined that a robbery or other criminal activity has occurred and the suspects are no longer on the premises, the communication technician will keep the employee on the phone in order to obtain pertinent information. The communications technician will advise the employee that they should not allow anyone to enter or leave the business except for law enforcement personnel. The communications technician will determine if anyone is hurt or injured and notify medical personnel as needed. The response of medical personnel will be coordinated

with the field supervisor. The communications technician will attempt to obtain the following information:

- a. Whether any weapon was used and if so the description;
  - b. A detailed description of the suspects including physical traits and clothing;
  - c. A detailed description of the suspect vehicle if known, mode of travel and direction; and
  - d. Items taken.
9. If upon contacting the business, the communications technician learns that the suspect is still on the premises, the communications technician will attempt to determine what the nature of the crime is, whether any acts of violence have occurred and if so what type of weapons were used. The communications technician will attempt to determine the overall status of what is happening inside of the business and relay that information to the officers. The communications technician, if possible, will attempt to maintain phone contact with the employee.
  10. If the business fails to answer the phone or fails to appear after speaking with the communications technician, officers will treat the call as a robbery in progress.
  11. If an employee exits the building and it is confirmed the offender(s) are still in the business, the employee should not be allowed to return to the business and the primary officer will gather information. The officers on the scene will immediately seal off entrances to the property and establish an inner perimeter.
  12. If the offenders have left the scene, the officer(s) will enter the building and secure the crime scene, pending the arrival of an officer to process the scene. The officer(s) will also ensure no one leaves or enters the building until such time as they have been interviewed.

F. False Alarms

1. If the responding officers determine the situation to be a false alarm, they will attempt to determine if it was a system failure or an employee error and make documentation of their findings.
2. If a particular location has repeated false alarms it should be brought to the attention of the patrol operations bureau lieutenant. The lieutenant shall review the incidents and if necessary contact the property owner to advise them of the problem. If the false alarms continue the lieutenant will notify the property owner that the SPD will not continue to respond to the alarms until the problem has been remedied.

G. Vehicle Alarms

1. Many motor vehicles are equipped with audible alarm systems that are triggered when a vehicle is tampered with or when sensors detect motions involving the vehicle.
2. Officers should approach the scene without lights or siren to avoid alerting possible suspects.
3. Officers should locate and inspect the vehicle for indication of tampering or forced entry.
4. Officers should attempt to locate the owner or driver of the vehicle to have the vehicle checked and the alarm reset.

H. Fire Alarms

1. Many homes and businesses are protected by fire alarm systems. Smoke and heat often activates the systems. Fire alarm activations are primarily the responsibility of

the fire department although police officers may be dispatched in conjunction with the fire department personnel.

2. Officers should proceed to the scene of the fire alarm safely and expeditiously.
3. Officers should attempt to determine if there is a fire or if the call is a false alarm, and relay all pertinent information to the communications technician.
4. Officers responding to fire alarms will adhere to fire response procedures in section 28.16.1.

I. Medical Alarms

1. Medical alarm systems are used to summon assistance from emergency medical service personnel. These are primarily the responsibility of the local emergency medical services.
2. Officers shall respond to medical alarms when appropriate and render aid to victims as needed.
3. If entry into an alarmed premise must be forced, officers should notify the shift supervisor prior to making forced entry and should prepare an incident report documenting the circumstances surrounding the entry.