


FORT SMITH POLICE DEPARTMENT

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SUBJECT	Alarm Response		
NUMBER	1108.08	EFFECTIVE DATE	March 22, 2001
SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE	Annually beginning December 1	ISSUE DATE	March 22, 2001
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APPROVED BY		CALEA STANDARDS	LE 81.2.13, COM 6.2.10

I. Purpose and Scope

- A. The purpose of this policy is to define procedures relating to the Fort Smith Police Department's monitoring of private alarm systems. This policy will also outline the role of the Fort Smith Police Department in the enforcement of the City of Fort Smith's ordinances regarding false alarms.

II. Policy

- A. The Fort Smith Police Department recognizes that monitoring the status of private alarm systems is a function best performed by alarm companies. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the Fort Smith Police Department to *not* monitor private security alarm systems. The Fort Smith Police Department will respond appropriately to *any* type of alarm that is otherwise reported to the Communications Unit.
- B. It shall be the policy of the Fort Smith Police Department, in accordance with Arkansas State Statute 12-10-314, to prohibit the installation of an alarm system by an alarm customer that, if activated, dials the Fort Smith Police Department's 9-1-1 telephone system.
- C. It shall be the policy of the Fort Smith Police Department to perform all record keeping necessary to enforce the City of Fort Smith's ordinances concerning false alarms.

III. Definitions

- A. *Alarm System* - Any mechanical, electrical, or other device that is monitored by a third party and designed to signal the occurrence of a burglary, robbery, or other criminal activity that requires the attention of public safety personnel.
- B. *Alarm System Customer* - Any person who purchases, leases, contracts for, or otherwise obtains an alarm system.
- C. *False Alarm* - An alarm signal that requires a response by the Fort Smith Police Department when a situation requiring that response does not in fact exist.
- D. The definitions contained in section III of this policy are applicable to this policy only.

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IV. Procedures for Private Alarms

- A. Fort Smith Police Department Communications Unit personnel shall enter the appropriate call-for-service information into the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system when a report of an activated alarm is received.
- B. After entering the appropriate information into the CAD system, Communications Unit personnel shall dispatch the recommended available officer(s) to the scene as quickly as possible. Upon arrival at the scene, the officer(s) shall inspect the area and determine whether the alarm signal was legitimate.
- C. Officers shall document their response to the alarm by utilizing the *FSPD Alarm Response Notification* form. As part of their documentation, officers shall indicate whether the alarm appears to be valid or false.
- D. The responding officer shall provide written notice to the alarm system customer on each alarm response made to the location. The notification shall be in the form of a written *Alarm Response Notification* form which shall be left at the location of the alarm.
- E. In addition to other information, the *FSPD Alarm Response Notification* form shall provide information to the alarm customer that:
 - 1. Advises the customer of their responsibility to take corrective action to prevent false alarms;
 - 2. Informs the customer of the false alarm penalties, as defined in the false alarm ordinance, section 20-31 through 20-33.
- F. Upon exceeding the specified number of false alarms at the same location within a calendar year, pursuant to City of Fort Smith ordinances, the alarm system customer shall be assessed a penalty fee.
- G. In the event of an alarm ringing directly into the Fort Smith Police Department Communications Unit utilizing the 9-1-1 telephone system, Communications Unit personnel shall inform the Communications Unit Supervisor of the call. The Communications Unit Supervisor shall take all reasonable steps necessary to contact the property owner and inform such owner of Arkansas § 12-10-310, as annotated, prohibiting such connections. The property owner will also be directed to reprogram their alarm system to dial the police department's non-emergency telephone number.

V. Procedures for TSA (Transportation Security Administration) Alarms

- A. TSA (Transportation Security Administration) implemented a push-button alarm system nationwide in 2015. The TSA detachment at the Fort Smith Regional Airport may activate an automated alarm by pushing a distress button within the airport. The alarm sends an automated message to the Fort Smith Police Department dispatch center that states there is an emergency at the Fort Smith Regional Airport terminal and to send an officer. This alarm comes to the dispatch center via the Fort Smith Police Department non-emergency number (479)709-5100. This alarm shall be treated by Communications Unit personnel and sworn officers in the same manner as parts A through F of Section IV of this policy.

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VI. Procedures for In-House Alarms

- A. The Fort Smith Police Department Communications Center monitors in-house alarms from the following locations:
1. Information Desk
 2. Criminal Investigations Division Receptionist
 3. Computer Forensics Lab
 4. Identification Office
 5. The Evidence Vault (including refrigerators inside the submission area and vault)
- B. In the event of an activation of the alarm at either the Information Desk or Criminal Investigations Division Reception area, the Communications Unit personnel shall first attempt to contact the area by phone. If contact cannot be made, they will then notify the nearest available officer to respond to the alarm activation.
- C. In the event of an activation of an alarm in the Evidence Vault, the corresponding blue-colored in-house alarm strobe light (or clear lights if it's one of the two refrigerators) should activate in the Communication Center and the corresponding blue-colored in-house alarm strobe light will alert at the Police Information Desk. Communications Center personnel will contact the Information Desk officer who will respond to the alarm and then notify an on duty supervisor. In the event the Information Desk is staffed with only civilian personnel, the civilian will immediately notify dispatch and the nearest patrol officer will respond to the alarm. If the Information Desk is closed/not staffed Communications center personnel will dispatch the nearest patrol officer. The responding officer should take his/her issued portable radio with them so that information can be relayed to others who may be responding. The officer should check all doors leading into the Evidence Vault. The responding officer will be responsible for notifying the Evidence Custodian or a Criminal Investigations supervisor of the active alarm. If the alarm is determined to be legitimate, the responding officer will immediately contact dispatch and request the nearest patrol unit for assistance and notify an on duty supervisor. The investigating officer will obtain a call-for-service number from dispatch and complete an Incident/Offense Report to document legitimate alarm activation.
- D. In the event of an activation of an alarm in the Computer Forensics Lab, the corresponding orange-colored in-house alarm strobe light should activate in the Communications Center and the corresponding blue-colored in-house alarm strobe light will alert at the Police Information Desk. Communications Center personnel will contact the Information Desk officer who will respond to the alarm and then notify an on-duty supervisor to make them aware of the alarm. If the officer is responding alone, Communications Center personnel shall also dispatch the closest available unit to assist. After being notified of the alarm, the desk officer will respond to check the security of the Computer Forensics Lab. In the event the Information Desk is staffed with only civilian personnel, the civilian will immediately notify dispatch and the nearest patrol officer will respond to the alarm. If the Information Desk is closed/not staffed Communications center personnel will dispatch the nearest patrol officer. The responding officer should take his assigned portable radio so that information regarding the alarm can be relayed to other units. Since this room has no outside access, the officer should check both doors leading into the Computer Forensics Lab. An on-duty supervisor will be responsible for making contact with the Special Investigations Unit Sergeant or the Network Administrator to notify them of the alarm activation.

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- E. The investigating officer will obtain a call-for-service number from dispatch and complete an Incident/Offense Report to document the event.
- F. In the event of an activation of an alarm in the Identification Office, the red corresponding in-house alarm strobe light will alert in the Communications Center and the corresponding blue-colored in-house alarm strobe light will alert at the Information Desk. Upon hearing the alarm sound and observing the activation is on the "ID Office Door or ID Office Motion," an officer assigned to the Information Desk will immediately call the Communications Center to confirm the alarm activation. Communications Center personnel will then notify an on-duty supervisor to make them aware of the alarm. After notifying the Communications Center of the alarm, the desk officer will respond to check the security of the Identification Office and processing area. If the officer is responding alone, Communications Center personnel shall also dispatch the closest available unit to assist. In the event the Information Desk is staffed with only civilian personnel, the civilian will immediately notify dispatch and the nearest patrol officer will respond to the alarm. If the Information Desk is closed/not staffed Communications Center personnel will dispatch the nearest patrol officer. The officer should take his assigned portable radio so that information regarding the alarm can be relayed to other units. Since this room has no outside access, the officer should check the door leading into the Identification Office and visually check the adjacent processing area. An on-duty supervisor will be responsible for making contact with the on-duty/on-call Criminal Investigations Supervisor, or the on-call Identification Officer, to notify them of the alarm activation.
- G. The investigating officer will obtain a call-for-service number from dispatch and complete an Incident/Offense Report to document the event.

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