


# **GAINESVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

## **GENERAL ORDER**

	<b>TITLE</b> Alarm Response and False Alarm Procedures	<b>ACCREDITATION</b> 81.2.12	
	<b>PROPONENT UNIT</b> Patrol Operations	<b>PRIOR REVISIONS</b> 02/28/01; 05/23/01, 12/18/19 <b>ATTACHMENT:</b>	
<b>NUMBER</b> 40.10	<b>ISSUE DATE</b> 07/01/1998	<b>REVISION DATE</b> 01/10/2022	<b>TOTAL PAGES</b> 8

I. **PURPOSE:** This Order defines alarms, and establishes a standardized response to valid and false alarms by Gainesville Police Department personnel.

### II. **DEFINITIONS:**

A. **Alarm System:** Any device that emits, transmits, or relays a signal intended to summon, or that would reasonably be expected to summon, law enforcement services to the alarm site. 'Alarm system' does NOT include devices:

1. Installed on vehicles, unless the vehicle is permanently located at the site;
2. Devices not audible or visible from the exterior of the structure that are designed to alert only the inhabitants of the device site; or
3. Devices designed for a purpose other than to alert for intrusion, burglary or robbery.

B. **False Alarm:**

1. A false alarm means an alarm dispatch or other response by the Gainesville 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.

2. **Exceptions to the Definition:**

- i Alarms occurring as a result of lightning, wind or other meteorological event, where there is clear evidence of physical damage to the alarm system
- ii Disruption of the telephone circuit beyond the control of the alarm operator or its agents, verified by written communication from the phone company;
- iii An electrical power disruption or failure in excess of four hours.

C. **False Alarm Reduction Unit (F.A.R.U):** A City/County combined Unit designated to administer, control and review alarm applications, permits, and false alarm reduction efforts.

- D. Notification of False Alarm Card:** Card utilized by law enforcement to notify premise owners/occupants of law enforcement response. The reverse side of the card is utilized for alarm permit violation(s). This card is provided by the Alachua County Sheriff's Office False Alarm Reduction Unit. Department members shall obtain the cards from the patrol forms area.

### **III. PROCEDURE:**

#### **A. General Response Procedures:**

1. **Department Response:** Department personnel shall respond promptly to alarms, ensuring the safety and security of Gainesville's citizens and their property. Responding officers will be guided by the relevant City of Gainesville ordinance(s) and the False Alarm Reduction Unit's (F.A.R.U.) procedures.
2. **Alarm Receipt:** The Gainesville Police Department will not physically monitor residential, commercial or other types of hold-up or intrusion alarms. Alarms to which Department personnel respond will be dispatched through the Combined Communications Center, or be an on-site response, such as with officer or citizen-initiated audible alarms.

#### **3. False Alarms**

- i **Billing:** Pursuant to provisions stipulated in City Ordinance Article IV, Sections 21.50-69, and the Inter-Agency Agreement, the County's F.A.R.U. shall record and bill for false alarms per the fee schedule outlined by City ordinance.
- ii **Tracking:** Shall be handled by the False Alarm Reduction Unit.

#### **4. Keyholder / Site Responder:**

- i The person(s) listed on the alarm permit is required to respond to the site of the alarm within 30 minutes if requested by GPD. Failure to respond within the time limit, and at the Department's request, results in a \$50 fine.
- ii On-scene officers shall request that Communications personnel make the contact, and will notify the Communications Center immediately upon arrival of the keyholder/responder for tracking purposes.

#### **5. Alarm Verification Calls Required:**

The alarm monitoring company is required to make a site call (to the alarm activation location) to verify burglary and intrusion alarms that are centrally monitored.

#### **Exceptions:**

- i If the alarm has properly operating visual or auditory sensors that enable the monitoring company to verify the alarm signal.

- ii Calls to sites where robbery and/or panic alarms are activated.
- 6. **Audible Alarm Deactivation:** Audible alarms are required to be deactivated within 15 minutes of sounding.
- 7. **Permitting:**
  - i Permits for residential, governmental, or commercial properties are issued and expire annually. A fee of \$15, whether the application is for initial permitting or for renewal, is collected.
  - ii Specific information is required for the permit application. Refer all questions to the False Alarm Reduction Unit personnel at 264-6650.
- 8. **Required Registration:** Alarm monitoring companies and alarm system contractors are required to register and submit an annual fee.
- 9. **Prohibited Devices:**
  - i Automatic direct dialers to law enforcement agencies or to the Combined Communications Center.
  - ii Alarm systems with 'One Plus Panic' feature
  - iii Single action non-recessed activation switches for hold-up/panic alarms.
- 10. **Required Devices/Battery Back-up:** The ordinance requires that alarm systems have a minimum of a four-hour auxiliary power supply.

**B. Robbery Alarms:** Generally applies to alarms received relative to open businesses:

- 1. **Approach:** Upon arrival at the scene of an alarm, sworn personnel should:
  - i Evaluate and cover potential escape routes,
  - ii Observe the business from concealed, strategic locations,
  - iii Pay attention to occupied parked vehicles and pedestrians who enter or exit the business.
  - iv Identify and report any suspicious circumstances to Communications and other responding units.
- 2. **Contacting Business:**
  - i After arrival and positioning, members may elect, after evaluating pedestrian traffic, to telephone (usually via Communications) the business to determine if a crime is in progress.

- ii A member who calls should identify him/herself as a law enforcement employee, inform the person answering the phone that an alarm has been received for the business, and request to speak with the person in charge immediately.
    - a When in contact with the person in charge, the member should repeat that an alarm has been received and ask if the alarm can be assumed to be false.
    - b If the person in charge indicates the alarm is false, the member should instruct him / her to exit the main entrance and walk to a designated location to contact on-scene officers.
    - c If the person or the individual who answers the telephone indicates that a crime is [may be] in progress, members' on-scene should take appropriate steps to contain the incident and summon any additional assistance needed.
- 3. **Use of Plain Clothes Personnel:** If pedestrian traffic appears to be normal and attempts to establish contact with the business by telephone have proven to be unsuccessful, on-scene uniform personnel may request that members in plain clothes (whose normal duties include arrests) respond to the scene.
  - i The plainclothes member may enter the business to survey the scene.
  - ii Plainclothes members should wear soft body armor when conducting a covert assessment.
- C. **Burglary/Intrusion Alarms:** Usually applies to closed businesses and residences, whether or not occupied, and may also apply to panic alarms at residences.
  - 1. **Approach:** Evaluate and cover potential escape routes.
  - 2. **Inspection:** Inspect the structure's exterior for an active alarm system or signs of unlawful entry.
    - i **Signs of Entry / Intrusion:** If a member finds evidence of an illegal entry, the alarm shall be treated as a burglary / intrusion in-progress.
      - a Secure the scene and establish a perimeter,
      - b Request canine, if available,
      - c If available, and on-scene, the canine officer shall be in charge of the search.
      - d Have Communications notify owner/keyholder, if there is no indication that an authorized person is on-site.
      - e If a residence, also determine, if possible, whether or not the owner / occupant:
        - 1) May be a victim of a home invasion or other crime in-progress
        - 2) Is expected to be off-site (out of town, at work, etc.)

- #### **D. Audible Alarms:**

- E. **Security Alarms at the Police Building:** Security alarms connected to sites at the main Police building, the remote Special Investigations Division location, and the Reichert House, are monitored by a privately contracted alarm-monitoring service. Alarm service representatives will notify the Police Department when an activated alarm is received.

1. **Point of Contact:** The Shift Lieutenant or designee is the contact, due to its 24-hour-a-day availability will be the point of contact for the alarm service and for Department members who have activated, or who are assisting with, an alarm. They can be reached by calling 352-955-1818.
  2. **Known Accidental Activation:**
    - i **Activating Member:** Members aware that they have (or may have) accidentally activated a GPD alarm will immediately contact and inform the Shift Lieutenant or designee.
  3. **Activated Alarm/Unknown Cause:**
    - i **Shift Lieutenant or designee:** Based on the information received from the alarm company (time lapse since activation, location, available resources, etc.) the supervisor will determine how the involved premises shall be checked.
      - a When possible, supervisors may assign personnel in the building to check on alarms at the police station.
      - b For off-site alarms, the supervisor may check it themselves, assign a field unit, or have Communications dispatch the call.
  4. **Valid Alarms:** Response to valid alarms shall be handled via standard operating procedures.
    - i When an alarm is verified as valid, and additional assistance is needed / requested, Communications should dispatch the closest available units.
    - ii Responding personnel shall immediately notify the Shift Lieutenant / designee upon detection of a problem so that proper follow-up notification and action can occur.
- F. **Verifying the Call:** On initial dispatch, the Combined Communications Center will advise responding officers whether or not the alarm is permitted. Regardless, officers shall, after investigating the circumstances, clear the call in one of the following ways:
1. **False alarms** shall be cleared with a Code "D" (1-7).
    - i **D-1:** Alarm not permitted – permit application shall be left on site.
    - ii **D-2:** Unable to contact a responder.
    - iii **D-3:** Responder(s) refused to or did not respond when requested.
    - iv **D-4:** Activated by alarm contractor testing.
    - v **D-5:** Apparent false alarm (whether or not contact made)
    - vi **D-6:** Other alarm problem - specify details

vii **D-7:** Alarm call canceled prior to arrival.

**2. Valid alarms**

- i Shall be cleared with the code relevant to the verified incident.
- ii Even if the system is not permitted, there is no fine for a valid alarm.

**G. Providing Alarm and Permitting Information / Notice:**

- 1. Officers will complete the 'Notice of Alarm Permit Violation' on the '*Notification of False Alarm*' Card and provide a False Alarm Ordinance information / registration packet at sites without current or valid alarm permits.
- 2. On calls where the alarm was determined to be false, officers shall leave a completed '*Notification of False Alarm*' Card.
- 3. Officers will leave a completed F.A.R.U. 'Notification of False Alarm' card on-site (e.g., inside, or on a door in a conspicuous place) when no contact is made with a responsible party.

**H. Alarm Problems:** Department personnel shall notify Communications (via secure communication) of locations at which an alarm will be a trouble spot for such reasons as being out of service due to technical difficulties, service being performed, or lack of contact with a responsible party for resetting.

**I. Enforcement:**

- 1. The False Alarm Reduction Unit will normally be the initiating entity for enforcement, and officers will assist only if requested.
- 2. If requested, officers will enforce violations via the civil citation process (see G.O. 40.21).

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**By Order of**

*Signed Original on File in the  
Accreditation Unit*

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**Tony R. Jones  
Chief of Police**

**Notification of False Alarm Card**



**NOTIFICATION  
OF FALSE ALARM**



TO (PERMIT NUMBER / ALARM LOCATION):	
FROM (NAME & ID NUMBER):	CHECK ONE: <input type="checkbox"/> ACSO <input type="checkbox"/> GPD
INCIDENT NUMBER:	

Law Enforcement responded to your premises on an alarm call and, upon investigation, found no evidence of a criminal offense or attempted criminal offense. False alarms are very costly for your law enforcement agencies, and ultimately all taxpayers. When units are dispatched to an alarm, other calls for service are put on hold until the responding units are clear. Fines are assessed for false alarms and unlawful or unpermitted alarm systems. Please contact your alarm company to repair any problems with your system or to receive instructions on its use.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT FINDINGS:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Found Secure   | <input type="checkbox"/> Address Not Visible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown Reason | <input type="checkbox"/> No Alarm Permit     |

COMMENTS:

**SEE REVERSE SIDE IF "NO ALARM PERMIT" IS CHECKED**

**IF YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE THE VICTIM OF A CRIME,  
PLEASE CALL THE ALACHUA COUNTY COMBINED  
COMMUNICATIONS CENTER AT 352-955-1818**

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NOTICE OF ALARM PERMIT VIOLATION</b>	
On _____	at _____, law enforcement
DATE	TIME
<p>responded to an alarm at your address. Please be aware that we do not have a record of your alarm system being permitted as required. The <u>additional</u> fine for false alarms from a non-permitted alarm system, or from an alarm system with a suspended or revoked permit, is \$200.00 and up depending on jurisdiction of alarm site. The Alarm Administrator may reduce this amount if the alarm system is permitted within ten days of the false alarm. <b>PLEASE NOTE:</b> The permitting and false alarm fees will still be charged in <u>addition</u> to the no permit fine. You should contact the False Alarm Reduction Unit within 10 days for reduced fee.</p>	

If you have any questions about this Official Notification or the False Alarm Ordinances, please contact:

**False Alarm Reduction Unit**

**P.O. 5489, Gainesville, FL 32627-5489**

**Office (352) 264-6650, FAX (352) 264-6691**

**ALARM SAFETY TIPS**

1. Train all appropriate people in the proper use of your alarm system.
2. Have the alarm user's manual accessible for all users.
3. Check the system regularly to ensure proper operation.
4. Use only certified and licensed alarm companies who install alarm equipment that meet national standards.
5. Install and use deadbolt-type locks all entry doors.