



GENERAL ORDER

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

Chapter: Operations	Section: 406.6
Subject: Response to Selected Situations	Topic: Bank Alarms
Accreditation: OPR.01.01, 02.01, 05.07	Revised:
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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to define policy and establish guidelines and procedures for responses to bank alarms that will provide for the safety of the deputy, employees of the bank and other citizens, as well as offering the greatest possibility for apprehension of the offender(s).

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office to respond to bank alarms in a professional and consistent manner. Bank alarms present a difficult problem to the agency. There are numerous false alarms and yet, because of the hazardous nature of a bank robbery, all alarms must be considered a robbery in progress until there is specific knowledge to the contrary.

III. EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER (ECC) RESPONSE

A. Upon receipt of a bank alarm, the ECC shall:

1. Immediately dispatch the closest patrol unit and backup unit. The first unit on the scene will assess the situation and direct other units as to routes of approach
 2. Prepare to telephone the bank after receiving instructions from the unit on the scene
 3. Telephone the bank to ascertain if the alarm is real or false
- a. The ECC shall identify themselves as the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office to the bank employee and ask if they had a robbery
1. When the bank is contacted and if there is a robbery in progress, the bank employee will reply "no" and hang up. If the bank employee volunteers information that the suspect(s) has left, the ECC dispatcher should attempt to obtain lookout information to include amount of time elapsed, direction of travel, and if a dye packet was taken. All pertinent information shall thereafter be broadcast to responding units.

2. If there was no robbery, the bank employee will reply "no" and give the trade name of the bank. The Emergency Communications Center dispatcher will then make arrangements to have an employee meet a deputy outside of the bank.
3. If the bank employee fails to follow proper procedures, note the discrepancies in CAD notes and notify an ECC supervisor.

IV. PATROL RESPONSE PROCEDURE

- A. Upon receipt of a bank alarm, the closest car strategy will be applied. The ECC will inquire if a unit is in the vicinity of the specific bank and if so, assign that unit along with a backup unit. The first unit on the scene will assess the situation and direct other units as to routes of approach
- B. In the event of a robbery or possible robbery, the first unit on the scene will request that the channel be held
- C. All units dispatched will be alert for suspicious persons and/or vehicles fleeing the scene. All units not dispatched will be on standby for possible fleeing vehicles in their respective sectors
- D. When approaching the scene, deputies shall:
 1. Assess the situation. Based upon the discretion of the deputy, emergency lights or siren should not be used unless traffic conditions or unusual circumstances dictate otherwise
 2. Attempt to arrive at the same time. If possible, deputies should approach the scene from different angles and observe the area for a short period of time for possible lookouts, getaway cars, or other suspicious circumstances. Responding units should be aware that bank robbers often work in teams and use counter surveillance, radios, and police scanners
 3. Park the Sheriff's Office vehicles at a reasonable distance from the scene and if possible, out of view of the bank. The vehicles must be secured prior to approaching the bank on foot. The distance the Sheriff's Office vehicles should be parked from the bank will depend on the location of the bank and approach routes and will vary from bank to bank
 4. Wait to approach the bank on foot until the backup units arrive. At that time, the approach will be conducted through a cautious, coordinated effort. However, the first unit on the scene will observe the bank for

unusual circumstances and provide additional information if necessary in addition to direction routes of approach to assigned units

- E. When approaching the bank and the first response unit does not observe a recognized bank official standing outside the building, the responding unit or supervisor will direct ECC to telephone the bank. If there is no answer or ECC detects unusual circumstances during the course of the telephone call, it will be assumed that a bank robbery is in progress and the following courses of action will be followed:
1. Secure the perimeter of the building. The responding unit or patrol supervisor may request additional units for assistance
 2. If necessary, streets may be blocked and traffic detoured away from the bank. The local fire and rescue agency shall be notified of the situation by the ECC dispatcher
- F. When all units have arrived at the scene, backup units and/or the patrol supervisor will approach the bank where they can safely observe the area without being detected by any possible suspects within the bank. If the patrol supervisor determines that one unit should remain mobile for the purpose of pursuit, he/she shall appoint a unit for this purpose. In addition, patrol units should:
1. Approach the bank on foot on a cautious, coordinated path avoiding a cross-fire situation
 2. Cover the most likely escape routes
 3. Note and transmit to ECC license numbers of suspicious or suspect vehicles
 4. Attempt to observe if a crime is still in progress
 5. Maintain a perimeter as long as there are potential robbers inside the bank. Under no circumstance will units on the scene enter the bank except to protect life
- G. If in approaching the bank, a unit observes the bank official standing outside the bank, caution and observation of the bank will continue until the unit verifies that a bank robbery is not in progress
- H. If the unit observes a crime in progress as suspect(s) are exiting the bank, the following procedures shall be followed:

1. If not seen by the suspect(s), the unit should wait for the suspect(s) to clear the bank doorway and building in order to allow the bank official to lock the doorway. Once that is accomplished, attempt to contact the suspect(s) and order them to surrender after all units are in position
2. If seen by the suspect(s), the unit should obtain cover, e.g. automobile, and attempt to verbally challenge and order the suspect(s) to surrender. The unit shall not take any risks that would endanger innocent persons, other deputies, or unit members. Every effort shall be made to prevent the suspect(s) from reentering the bank and creating a potential hostage situation
3. If the suspect(s) return to the interior of the bank before the doors can be locked, a hostage situation will exist and SWAT and CNT shall be requested

V. CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION RESPONSE

- A. If suspects are apprehended at the scene, the below procedures shall be followed:
 1. Search for weapons and other evidence
 2. Handcuff the suspect(s) and double lock the cuffs
 3. Render aid and assistance
 4. Secure and protect the crime scene
 5. Detain witnesses
 6. Notify ECC
 7. Notify the CID supervisor, CSI, and the FBI
 8. Send an Administrative/Board of Supervisors page
- B. If the suspect(s) have fled the scene, the below procedures shall be followed;
 1. Render aid and assistance
 2. Detain witnesses and obtain statements of the crime including weapons used
 3. Obtain a description of the suspect(s) and suspect vehicle(s)

4. Notify ECC of the above information for immediate dispatch to all units
5. Secure and protect the crime scene
6. Return those units to service that are not needed at the scene

VI. BANK PROCEDURES

- A. If a false alarm occurs, a pre-designated bank official, preferably the manager or his/her representative will stand outside the bank and await Sheriff's Office officials. Bank officials may also contact the Sheriff's Office by telephone and notify ECC of the false alarm, however a bank official is still required to stand outside the bank since the Sheriff's Office maintains a strict policy of verifying all bank alarms. Under no circumstance, except for the protection of life, shall a deputy enter a bank in an alarm situation. The waiting bank officer may verify that the alarm is false and that a bank robbery is not in progress.
- B. If the alarm is not false and a bank official is not standing outside the bank, attempts will be made to contact the bank by telephone. If there is no answer or if unusual circumstances are detected over the telephone, the Sheriff's Office will assume that a crime is in progress and will take the necessary steps to protect the lives of all involved as well as apprehend the suspect(s).