DEPARTMENTAL GENERAL ORDER 26-030

ST. LOUIS COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT - OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

August 12, 2026

Index As:
Alarm Activation Reports
Alarm System Code
False Alarms
Open Doors

Cancels:
General Order 01-30

ALARM SYSTEM CODE

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish procedures for enforcing Chapter 720, SLCRO, titled "Alarm System Code," which regulates the installation and use of alarm systems in the unincorporated areas of St. Louis County.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Alarm System – any mechanical or electrical device which is designed to be activated manually or automatically upon the detection of an unauthorized entry, intrusion, or other emergency in or on any building, structure, facility or premises through the emission of a sound or transmission of a signal or message, including but not limited to: fire alarm, carbon monoxide detector, medical alert, automobile alarm and panic alarm.

B. False Alarm - any activation of an alarm system intentionally or by inadvertence, negligence, or unintentional act, including malfunction of the alarm system, to which the Department responds, except that no false alarm has occurred when:

1. The alarm is caused by the malfunction of the indicator at the Department;

2. The alarm is caused by damage, testing or repair of telephone equipment or lines by the telephone company and the false alarm is promptly reported to the telephone company;

3. The alarm is caused by an attempted and unauthorized or illegal entry, of which there is visible evidence;

4. The alarm is intentionally caused by a resident or business acting under a reasonable belief that a need exists to call the Department;

5. The alarm is cancelled by a call to the Department before officers' arrival at the source of the alarm.

C. Automatic Dialing Device - an alarm system which automatically dials a specific telephone number and transmits an emergency message by a recording over regular telephone lines when actuated.

III. PROCEDURE

A. P**olice** officers shall respond to and investigate all alarm activations **except cancelled residential alarm activations when Dispatch has verified the cancellation and has** notified the officer prior to arrival.

B. Officers shall prepare a **False** Alarm Report on all **false** alarms that they have investigated, with the following exceptions:

1. A criminal offense has occurred or is suspected for which an appropriate offense report will be completed.

2. The precinct watch commander **has determined that the alarm was caused by** severe weather or other unique conditions (i.e., heavy winds, damage to **telephone lines**, or power outages) **and authorized officers not to complete the report.**

C. When an alarm is investigated, effort will be made to contact the homeowner/business owner for the purpose of notifying them of the alarm activation and possible service charge. The **responding** officer shall advise the homeowner/business owner of the**ir** name, **the** complaint number, **and the** date and time of the alarm.

D. When it is not possible to make notification of the alarm sounding and subsequent charge to an appropriate party in person or by phone, notification will be accomplished in the following manner:

1. A "**Crime Prevention Notice**" **(F-388)** will be completed. **Officers shall check the box marked "Other" on the F-388 and write "Alarm Sounding" and the number of the False Alarm Report in the comments section of the F-388**.

2. **Officers shall** place the **F-388 notice** in an inconspicuous **location**, such as a mail slot **in a door of the residence** or beneath the door of a residence so that it cannot be seen by the **public**. The card **shall not be placed** in a homeowner's mailbox.

3. In the event there is no inconspicuous place to leave the **F-388 notice,** the **False Alarm R**eport will reflect that notification could not be made.

E. The **False** Alarm Report will be completed **by accessing the Heads-Up Display (HUD) on the Department Intranet, navigating to "Law Links" and selecting "Add Report" under "False Alarm Reports."**

IV. OPEN DOORS

When responding to an alarm sounding at a residence or business that is unoccupied and the premise is found **unsecured**, the following actions will be taken by the reporting officer:

A. The interior of the premises will be searched, and every effort will be made to determine the cause **of** the alarm activation.

B. If a criminal offense is **suspected or** discovered, the appropriate CARE report will be prepared reflecting the incident.

C. If a criminal offense did not occur or it cannot be determined why the alarm was activated, the "open door" will be reflected in the narrative section of the **False** Alarm report.

D. In all "open door" situations, every effort will be made to have the owner respond to secure the premises.

V. SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY

A. Supervisors are responsible for approving False Alarm Reports and determining whether a false alarm has occurred within seven (7) days of the incident. Supervisors may access False Alarm Reports through the HUD system. During the approval process, a prompt will appear with the option to assess a False Alarm Fee for Service under SLCRO § 720.140. Fee for Service assessments for all alarms determined to be false shall be made by the supervisor using the prompt.

B. In the event that a Fee for Service assessment is revoked after the False Alarm Report is approved, the Precinct Commander may request a change by emailing the Alarm System Coordinator. The Alarm System Coordinator will acknowledge the change and save the email in the False Alarm files housed in the Fiscal Services Unit.

VI. THE ALARM SYSTEM COORDINATOR

A. During daytime business hours, the Alarm System Coordinator will handle inquiries concerning service charge information.

B. The Alarm System Coordinator will notify the Office of the County Counselor for possible prosecution proceedings **under SLCRO § 720.140 if a service charge is not paid within thirty days after the homeowner receives notice of the service charge.**

VII. BUREAU OF COMMUNICATIONS

When the Department receives an automatic dialer alarm with a recorded message in violation of Section 720.150 of the Alarm System Code as determined by the Bureau of Communications, **the dispatchers shall follow Bureau procedure in reporting the incident to the appropriate precinct.**

Adopted by Command Staff

By order of:

COLONEL JUAN COX
Chief of Police

JC:jl

Attachment:
F-388 Crime Prevention Notice

Approved at the regular Board meeting of Police Commissioners dated August 12, 2026.

_____
Commissioner
Chair

_____
Commissioner
Secretary

Distribution
All Department Personnel

CALEA Reference
81.2.13