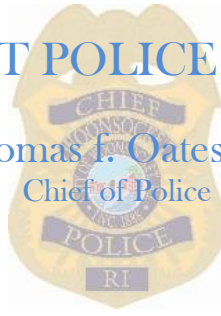


# WOONSOCKET POLICE DEPARTMENT

Thomas J. Oates, III  
Chief of Police



TYPE OF ORDER	NUMBER/SERIES	ISSUE DATE	EFFECTIVE DATE
General Order	320.08	11/19/2020	11/22/2020
SUBJECT		PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DATES	
Monitoring & Responding to Alarms		6/16/2015	
ACCREDITATION		RE-EVALUATION DATE	
CALEA Standards: 81.2.13 RIPAC Standards:		11/3/2020, 12/15/2022	
INDEX		DISTRIBUTION	
Patrol Functions		Sworn Personnel Communications Personnel	

## MONITORING AND RESPONDING TO ALARMS

### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines in responding to hold-up, panic, and intrusion alarms in the City of Woonsocket. Hold-up and intrusion alarms have been installed in some banking institutions, handling facilities, or secure locations throughout the city to alert this department of “robbery in progress” or unauthorized intrusion at the facility.

### II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Woonsocket Police Department to provide guidance and training to officers to aid them in carrying out their duties and assignments in a manner that enhances their effectiveness and which utilizes a standardized method designed to provide for officer safety.

Therefore, it shall be the policy of the Woonsocket Police Department to establish a response plan for its police officers by regulating how they are dispatched and how they respond to such alarms.

### III. DEFINITIONS

**Alarm System or Device:** Means any equipment or assembly of equipment of whatever nature, designed to detect and signal an unauthorized intrusion into or upon premises or to signal a burglary or robbery or any attempt at premises, for which police are expected to respond.

**Alarm User:** Means any person, group of persons, association, firm, partnership corporation or organization, resident or business owner who has possession or control of any building, structure or facility, including vehicles, vessels, campers or trailers, on whose premises an alarm system is maintained or installed for activation in the event of any unauthorized intrusion, burglary or robbery or any attempt upon or at such building structure or facility.

**Audible-Visual Alarm:** This means any device designed for the protection against unauthorized entry on-premise generating an external, audible sound or flashing light or both when activated.

**False Alarm:** This means the activation of an alarm system through mechanical failure, malfunction, improper installation, or negligence. Such terminology does not include, for example, alarms caused by hurricanes, storms, or other violent conditions that are clearly beyond the control of the alarm user.

#### IV. PROCEDURE

The procedures stated herein are to be used for training officers and to guide all personnel. The step-by-step procedures are meant to be guidelines and will be utilized whenever practical. The officer should always be aware procedures may vary or additional steps may be necessary, from time to time, depending on the unique circumstances of a particular incident. The alarm responses will be described below.

- A. Upon receiving notice from a private security alarm company of alarm activation, or alarms that are monitored, Communications Center personnel shall obtain all pertinent information relating to that alarm activation, to include:
  - 1. Name and telephone number of private security alarm company;
  - 2. Address or location or department where the alarm has been activated;
  - 3. Telephone number of the location, department, or person in charge to be immediately contacted;
  - 4. The specific area within location or department where security has been breached; and
  - 5. Whether a suspect(s) still appears to be in the location.
- B. ARMED ROBBERY RESPONSE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Officers shall acknowledge receipt of the message from the Communications Center.
2. Officers shall respond according to the priority provided by Communications Center personnel, unless:
  - a. Communications Center personnel change the priority response;
  - b. Specifically directed by the patrol supervisor to change the priority; or
  - c. The responding officer observes facts, which would warrant a change in the priority response and communicates such facts to the Communications Center;
3. When an officer is dispatched to a robbery alarm, they should consider the following:
  - a. Area of building and building layout;
  - b. Parking lots in the area;
  - c. Surrounding streets;
  - d. Avenues for escape;
  - e. Plans to make adjustments in response as additional information becomes available; and
  - f. Consideration of available staffing.
4. Officers should use a low profile approach in their response.
  - a. Avoid giving offenders early warnings.
    - 1) Shut siren down a one-half mile out.
    - 2) Shut down emergency lights before the location is visible.
5. During emergency equipment shutdown, the officer will use good judgment while operating the police unit.
6. State law requires emergency lights and siren be activated while driving at emergency response speeds. Consideration should be given to shut off emergency lights and siren and to slow down and drive according to speed restrictions, traffic, and road conditions to arrive safely and tactically.
7. Upon arrival to the area of the robbery alarm the officer should:
  - a. Not pull up in front of the building;
  - b. Survey the scene;
  - c. Look for a suspect vehicle(s) and backup offenders;
  - d. Keep arrival as undetectable as possible; and
  - e. Not run outside or inside.
8. The use of cover is extremely important at the scene.

- a. Position the patrol unit by using the engine block for cover;
  - b. Check for use of natural cover (fire hydrants, trees, utility poles, etc.);
  - c. Maintain a safe distance to gain tactical superiority;
  - d. Never give up your cover;
  - e. During the nighttime, arrive in blackout mode; and
  - f. Do not silhouette yourself under street lights.
9. Officers will secure the perimeter and not enter the building. Reasons not to enter include:
- a. If an officer approaches and enters, the suspect can identify a uniform long before the officer can identify suspect(s);
  - b. The suspect may hide behind a counter or pose as a customer or employee to ambush the officers as they enter;
  - c. There are too many areas to cover if the officer enters; and
  - d. Officers who enter must also consider the use of force while inside and the innocent bystanders who may be at risk.
10. Areas of responsibility:
- a. Officers should avoid obstructions and have a clear field of fire;
  - b. Stop pedestrian traffic from entering establishments;
  - c. Use caution dealing with civilians. Innocent looking civilians should be questioned from cover positions utilizing proper procedures. *(Robbery lookouts have been dressed as executives, janitors, and shoppers;*
  - d. Officers will cover all exits including the rear of the building;
  - e. Too many officers at the scene will create crossfire concerns; and
  - f. Additional units, other than initial responding units, should set up an outside perimeter to prevent escape and be in a position to assist in considering the threat of weapons and/or a potential hostage situation.
11. Verification
- a. Upon arrival, the primary officer will notify Communications Center personnel of the status outside the establishment once the area is secured.
  - b. Communications Center personnel shall:
    - 1) Call the establishment by telephone and ask for a supervisor or manager;
    - 2) Gather information;
    - 3) Have one (1) representative respond outside to meet with officers;
    - 4) Obtain a description of that representative and advise the officers assigned to the call; and
    - 5) Advise the officer, by radio that the representative will exit.

- c. If the Communications Center has good reason to believe that a robbery is in progress, Communications Center personnel will try to keep the phone line open to gather intelligence for the officers.

12. If a robbery is NOT in progress:

- a. Have one (1) representative meet with officers outside;
- b. Instruct them to exit the front door with identification in hand;
- c. Tell them to walk calmly and keep their hands in plain view; and
- d. Officers will not leave cover until the employee exits and are verified by the contact officer while backup officers provide cover.

13. Confrontation with a suspect(s):

- a. If an armed suspect(s) exits, the primary officer will allow the suspect(s) to exit;
- b. The officer shall identify themselves and give verbal commands e.g. **"Police! Don't move"**;
- c. If a suspect has a weapon in hand, have them slowly place the weapon on the ground;
- d. Have suspect(s) keep their hands above their head;
- e. Have them move away from the weapon and away from entrances and windows;
- f. Instruct the suspect to turn in place, a full 360-degree turn having the suspect facing away from officers when the turn is completed;
- g. Instruct the suspect to walk backward toward contact/arresting officer; and
  - 1) Use constant verbal commands with short abrupt words.
  - 2) Make sure the suspect does not look back at officers.
- h. The suspect will be taken into custody while other officers maintain their areas of cover. Officers will use caution concerning suspect vehicles of additional offenders. Utilize proper procedures while taking suspect(s) into custody.

C. RESPONSE TO BURGLARY ALARMS - BUILDING CHECKS

- 1. Response to a dispatched burglary alarm is similar to response procedure for a robbery alarm, concerning considerations to be aware of when responding and the use of a low profile approach.
- 2. The officer should position the front of the patrol unit pointed in the direction the officer intends on taking to check the building.
- 3. The back-up officer will proceed in the opposite direction of the first responding officer.

- a. When officers are checking the building from the opposite direction, eventually the officers will meet. After meeting, the officers should whenever practicable bypass each other and continue the exterior check.
4. When checking a building, the officer will walk approximately fifteen (15) to twenty (20) feet from the building to have better visibility from the roof to ground level.
  - a. The officer approaching the facility shall watch for suspicious persons and/or vehicles in the area of the facility and communicate any suspicious activity to the Communications Center;
  - b. The approaching officer will meet with the manager and request photo identification from the person identifying them as the representative of the facility;
  - c. Once identified and the alarm verified as being accidental by a visual inspection of the building, the officer will advise the Communications Center. The remaining units may then clear from the area; and
  - d. In the event the Communications Center does not make contact with a representative within a reasonable amount of time, then the alarm shall be considered to be “actual” or “in progress”. Tactical positions shall be maintained until contact can be made and the Communications Center personnel can determine the state of the alarm.
5. If the officer locates an unsecured door, which shows no force, the officer will remain at that location and notify the Communications Center of the location of the unsecured door.
  - a. The second officer will complete an entire exterior check of the building;
  - b. The second officer will then meet up with the officer, standing by the unsecured door;
  - c. The officer will then decide as to whether or not a perimeter is needed based on the type of building, location, circumstances surrounding the alarm (i.e., interior motion, glass breakage, prior breaks, etc.);
  - d. If a perimeter is needed, the officers will contact the Communications Center requesting assistance and advise where the backup units are to position themselves;
  - e. Regardless of whether or not a perimeter is needed, officers will not enter the interior of any building alone;
  - f. Officers who enter the interior of a building to conduct an interior search will notify the Communications Center before entry;
  - g. If the officer locates forced entry or evidence of a break, the officer will remain at that location and contact the Communications Center for back up. Instruct officers responding where to position themselves on the perimeter;

- h. The second officer on the scene will complete an exterior check of the building until the entire building has been checked;
  - i. Once the exterior check is completed and the perimeter is secured, the interior check will be conducted with a minimum of two (2) officers;
  - j. Officers will not enter alone unless the officer has a reasonable belief that life is in jeopardy and the officers must act; and
  - k. Before entering, the officers will contact the Communications Center and advise that they are going to enter the building.
6. During an interior search, officers will never separate.
- a. Officers must be able to see each other and all other officers in the search party at all times;
  - b. Officers will conduct interior searches with a weapon in hand, even if it is believed the offender has left the premises;
  - c. Officers are at a disadvantage when conducting interior searches if an armed suspect is lying in wait;
  - d. The weapon will be held at the low ready position; and
  - e. When the officer believes that a threat is imminent, the officer's weapon will be held at the high ready position; the third eye concept will be utilized (the third eye is the concept that as your body turns toward a threat, your weapon, lined up in the center, turns too. *(The weapon sees what your eyes see)*).
7. Proper equipment must be utilized. Always have a light source.
8. Be noise conscious. The sounds you make in communicating with your partner will be conducted quietly.
- a. Listening is your safest option in locating a suspect.
9. Property representatives are never allowed to help officers search. The officers will instruct the representative not to enter the area until such time that the area has been cleared by officers.
10. Communications Center personnel will:
- a. Notify all officers on the perimeter that officers are entering the building; and
  - b. Will dispatch a supervisor to all possible breaks in progress, if available.

#### D. PATROL SUPERVISOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. Immediately respond to the bank/financial institution/business to assume command and control of patrol operations.
- 2. Ensure that a sufficient number of patrol officers are dispatched to ensure the perimeter of the bank/financial institution.

3. Immediately notify the Officer-in-Charge (OIC) if a problem exists outside or within the bank/financial institution.
4. Monitor and ensure compliance with this policy.

E. USE OF FORCE

Any use of force employed during a bank/financial institution alarm incident shall be consistent with General Order *300.01 Response to Resistance*.

Per order,

***Thomas F. Oates, III***

Chief of Police

***Written directives published within PowerDMS are in full force and effect on the referenced dates and have been approved by the Chief of Police***