

12.135 RESPONDING TO ALARMS AND REPORTING FALSE ALARMS

References:

Cincinnati Municipal Code, Chapter 807 - Alarms
Cincinnati Municipal Code, Section 108-5

Definitions:

Multi-Agency Radio Communications System (MARCS) – radios that allow direct communication with local Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs). These alarms will only be activated by a Cincinnati Public School (CPS) employee when it is not feasible or possible to make phone contact through 9-1-1.

Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) – Mutual Aid Police Dispatch Centers for the City of Cincinnati, Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, and City of Norwood.

Purpose:

Designate the Records Management System (RMS) as the uniform method for documenting a false holdup, burglar, audible, panic, Robbery Apprehension Program (RAP), or MARCS alarm.

Improve the effectiveness of alarm systems and reduce the number of false alarms.

Document false alarms resulting from defective alarm equipment or subscriber negligence and provide information for determining fees.

Expedite the response and arrival of law enforcement personnel to emergency incidents occurring on school property.

Policy:

Department personnel will respond to and investigate all audible, burglar, holdup, panic, RAP and MARCS alarms. Officers will exercise due caution when investigating these alarms and shall continue to do so until the alarm is proven to be false or, prior to an officer's arrival, the alarm is cancelled by the alarm company through the Emergency Communications Center (ECC).

After careful consideration of the circumstances, field supervisors may cancel response to a burglar, holdup, or panic alarm activation when operational needs dictate.

Examples of this are: inclement weather / high winds, meter reader activity, electrical outages, etc. Supervisors should give special consideration when these situations involve panic alarms or any suspicious circumstances. Supervisors may not cancel response to MARCS alarms or RAP alarms.

The Department may impose fees for multiple false alarms from the same user pursuant to Cincinnati Municipal Code, Chapter 807.

Information:

Alarm companies are required, by ordinance, to make a second attempt to reach the complainant at an alternate number if there is no answer on their first attempt to contact a complainant. If they are unable to reach the complainant on the second attempt, the alarm company will then contact ECC to request police response.

The activation of a MARCS alarm by a school employee could mean an active shooter incident is in progress. Officers responding to these alarms should keep in mind that active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. In situations where it is confirmed a MARCS alarm has been activated due to an active shooter incident, officers will follow the active shooter response plan outlined in the Department's Tactical Patrol Guide.

Procedure:**A. Reporting False Alarm Activations**

1. The RMS Alarm Responses module will be used to complete a record for the following **false** alarms:
 - a. Non-residential alarm
 - b. Residential Alarm
 - c. Signal 66: direct line holdup alarm
 - d. Signal 7: burglar alarm
 - e. Robbery Apprehension Program (RAP) alarm
 - 1) In addition to completing the Alarm Responses module, the investigating officer will immediately contact the Criminal Investigation Section (CIS) desk with the false RAP alarm information.
 - f. MARCS alarm.
 - g. Panic alarm
 - h. Panic alarm from vehicles
 - 1) These include audible or silent duress alarms activated by a vehicle occupant and transmitted to an alarm company. They do not include audible alarms indicating vehicle tampering or break-in.
2. Do not complete the Alarm Responses module in RMS for:
 - a. Offenses that will be documented as a Case Report in RMS.
 - b. An alarm activated by an officer during the investigation of a Place Found Open (PFO) (see Section B.).

- c. A false fire box alarm.
 - d. An audible tampering alarm from a vehicle.
 - e. False alarms cancelled by the alarm company through ECC, prior to police arrival.
 - f. False alarms investigated by an officer working an off-duty extension of police services detail for the registered alarm holder.
3. Entering information into the Alarm Responses module.
- a. Ensure the officer completing the Alarm Response module is the same officer who is logged into the Mobile Data Computer and RMS.
 - b. In the Alarm Responses module, select the “Add Record” tab to open a new record.
 - c. Enter the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) number, into the CAD Number field.
 - d. The following information is mandated by the City’s alarm ordinance. Enter all information accurately into the Alarm Responses module. The information is reference material for alarm appeal hearings and municipal court.
 - 1) Occurred Date/Time – Enter the date and time of dispatch.
 - 2) Alarm (Verified) Address – Verify/enter the numeric and street name to allow for proper billing of the subscriber.
 - 3) Apartment/Building Number - In addition to the street address, include the apartment number, building number, etc.
 - 4) CSZ – Enter the City, State, and Zip Code of the alarm location address.
 - 5) District – Enter or select from the drop-down menu the district in which the alarm occurred.
 - 6) Beat - Enter or select from the drop-down menu the beat in which the alarm occurred.
 - 7) Alarm Owner Name - Record the full name of the business or residential subscriber.
 - 8) Registration Number - Is provided by the alarm company of the registered alarm user, in the text of the radio run. If no registration number is provided, type "NONE" in the box.
 - 9) Type of User - Select the user type from the drop-down menu.

- 10) Owner Representative On Scene – Use the drop-down menu to indicate if an owner/representative is on scene while the police are present.
 - a) If an owner/representative is on scene, obtain and record the individual's name in the appropriate field. It is not necessary to obtain an owner or representative's signature.
- 11) Alarm Type - Select the alarm type from the drop-down menu.
- 12) Alarm Company - Record only if known (e.g., information from ECC, owner or company representative).
- 13) Alarm Company Responded - Select from the drop-down menu.
 - a) If an alarm company representative responds while the police are at the scene, record the name of the individual in the field provided.
- 14) Alarm Location - If known, enter the exact location in the business or residence of the alarm activation (i.e. front door, 1st floor rear window, etc.).
- 15) Able To Search Premises - Select the appropriate response from the drop-down menu.
- 16) K-9 - Note the involvement of a canine team using the drop-down menu.
- 17) Cause - This is the reporting officer's judgment, based upon known facts and observations while at the scene. Select the response from the drop-down menu. Enter additional comments in the Explain field, if necessary.
- 18) Weather Conditions - Select the appropriate response from the drop-down menu of options provided, based upon the officer's observations at the time of dispatch and arrival. Note: Multiple responses can be selected for this field. Enter additional comments in the Explain field, if necessary.
- 19) Reporting Officer – Enter the Employee ID # for the reporting officer or scroll through and select the reporting officer from the list. The rank, and badge number of the reporting officer will auto-populate the respective fields. This officer need not be the officer dispatched or first at the scene. However, the reporting officer must have been on the scene during the alarm investigation.
- 20) Other Comments - This space is available for entry of any relevant information. For example, the reporting officer may note an area-wide power outage at the time of the alarm. Report any information which will help the subscriber improve the alarm system.

4. Workflow the Alarm Response record directly to False Alarms Response Unit (FARU)
 - a. FARU will:
 - 1) Review each Alarm Response record for completeness and accuracy.
 - 2) Compare the report with the ECC computerized summary of alarms.
 - a) If an Alarm Response record is not received, notify the affected unit commander.
 - 1] The unit commander will take the necessary action to ensure FARU receives the required Alarm Response record.
 - 3) Correct the Alarm Response record as necessary.
 - a) FARU may workflow an inaccurate Alarm Response record back to the originating officer for correction/completion.
 - 4) Enter the information from the Alarm Response record into the alarm billing system database.
 - 5) Charge alarm users for false alarms as authorized by City Ordinance.
- B. Alarms Activated by Officers Checking a Place Found Open
 1. Do not complete an RMS Alarm Response record.
 2. Complete a General Conditions Report in RMS for a PFO.
 - a. In the section titled "Action Taken," state the investigating officer activated the alarm while searching the premises.
 3. Workflow the completed General Conditions Report for supervisory approval.
 4. This alarm activation will not be counted against the alarm user.