

GENERAL ORDER
FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT



SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO MOBILE SECURITY DEVICES	NUMBER:	520.8
CANCELS ORDER DATED: 4-1-04	DATE:	7-1-10

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish overall guidelines and procedures regarding requests for response to Mobile Security Device (MSD) activations.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Fairfax County Police Department to assure an organized and well considered response to reports of mobile security device activations. A controlled response provides the greatest measure of safety for responding officers while ensuring resources are deployed in an efficient manner.

It is the policy of the Fairfax County Police Department to dispatch appropriate resources to all reported mobile security device activations indicating a life safety or personal protection emergency. Generally, these types of activations include those originating from an automatic collision notification (vehicle crash) or manual activation device (personal safety).

In regards to property protection or asset theft MSD activations, it is the policy of the Fairfax County Police Department to respond only to verified activations.

The use of and response to activations of mobile security devices are specifically not subject to the provisions of Chapter 8.1 of the Code of the County of Fairfax, Security Alarm Systems, or the reporting provisions of General Order 520.1, Response to Alarms.

III. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the following terms have the meaning indicated:

- A. Automatic Collision Notification (ACN): Activation of the MSD as the result of a motor vehicle crash, usually coincident to activation of the automobile air bag system and/or rollover sensors.
- B. Global Positioning System (GPS): A system of satellites and ground stations monitored by the U.S. Air Force to provide accurate latitude, longitude, and altitude information to GPS receivers.

GENERAL ORDER
FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT



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- C. Listen-in: A mode of MSD monitoring where the operator can hear sounds in or around the MSD protected asset or person through a voice channel without evidence of this happening at the MSD.
- D. Manual Activation Device: A general term for any device that allows the user to manually initiate an alarm signal. These devices include handheld or remote control devices. They also include integrated devices (such as keypads) and single function devices (such as panic buttons), which are mounted in a fixed location relative to the rest of the MSD system and are usually hard-wired to the system.
- E. Mobile Security Devices (MSD): Those security devices, or combinations of devices, that are mobile in nature; that may be installed in motor vehicles or other conveyances, or may be carried by pedestrians; that are used for the purpose of personal safety and/or asset protection; and that transmit assistance requests to monitoring centers; also known as MSD Systems.
- F. Monitoring Center: The physical place where MSD monitoring is conducted.
- G. MSD Request for Response: A request for law enforcement response to an activation of an MSD unit or the patching of a call to a law enforcement agency as the result of a MSD activation.
- H. MSD User: The person, firm, partnership, association, corporation, company or organization of any kind which uses or is in control of any MSD unit.
- I. MSD Verification: An attempt to obtain validation of an emergency or dispatchable condition by on-site inspection, audio, video, or other electronic confirmation.
- J. Patch-In: A mode of MSD monitoring where the operator, user, and Department of Public Safety Communications (DPSC) personnel are connected in a three-way call configuration and all parties can speak and hear each other simultaneously.

GENERAL ORDER
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CANCELS ORDER DATED: 4-1-04	DATE:	7-1-10

- K. Property Protection/Asset Theft MSD Activation: Activation of the MSD as the result of apparent theft or disturbance of a motor vehicle or other protected asset. These do not include instances in which a life safety situation exists.

- L. Talk/Listen: A mode of MSD monitoring where both the operator and MSD user can speak and hear simultaneously (like a normal telephone connection).

IV. BACKGROUND

MSDs include two-way wireless communications and global positioning satellite (GPS) technology combined into a vehicle-mounted or portable unit that provides a user interface to obtain assistance in a variety of situations. The systems emit a panic or distress signal along with instant information on the location of the transmitting unit when there is airbag deployment, vehicle rollover, theft, or activation of a panic button by the user. The signal is received by a third party monitoring center that in turn notifies the appropriate public safety agency for response.

When an MSD is activated, a signal is sent from the location of the activation to the monitoring center. The monitoring center should be able to determine if the activation is due to a life safety/personal protection activation or a property protection/asset theft activation. With many systems, the monitoring center has the ability to listen-in and determine if an actual emergency exists. Furthermore, some systems include a voice link in which the monitoring center can communicate directly with the MSD user. These methods should be used by the monitoring center to verify an activation prior to notifying the DPSC and making a MSD request for response.

MSD activations may be generally characterized as life safety/personal protection emergencies and property protection/asset theft incidents. Life safety/personal protection emergencies include activations as the result of automobile collision notification (ACN) or a manual activation (panic) device. ACNs are activated in some model automobiles in the event of vehicle rollover or a collision resulting in airbag deployment. Manual activation devices include vehicle-mounted panic buttons, as well as handheld and remote devices. Property protection/asset theft activations include those initiated as a result of apparent theft of the vehicle. These are

GENERAL ORDER
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activated when a vehicle is operated without first deactivating the MSD. The distinct nature of a life safety vs. property safety activation requires different response protocols.

V. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES

A. Policy

The DPSC call taker is responsible for obtaining sufficient information from the monitoring center to ensure the proper classification of the MSD activation. If the monitoring center has confirmed that an actual criminal action or personal emergency has taken place, the DPSC call taker shall enter the actual event rather than an alarm activation.

B. Requests for Response to an Automobile Collision Notification (ACN)

1. On receipt of a request for response to an ACN, the DPSC call taker shall enter the event, including all available information. The monitoring center must provide an actual street location and not just GPS coordinates. The call taker shall determine what verification methods, such as listen-in, talk/listen, or patch-in that activated ACN system supports. If the ACN system includes such verification features, the monitoring center shall be requested to utilize them and report the findings to DPSC.
2. DPSC dispatchers shall, on the basis of the event priority, dispatch appropriate fire and rescue and police units in accordance with existing general orders and DPSC standard operating procedures.

C. Requests for Response to a Manual Activation Device

1. On receipt of a request for response to a manual activation device, the DPSC call taker shall enter the event, including all available information. The monitoring center must provide an actual street location and not just GPS coordinates. The call taker shall determine what verification methods, such as listen-in, talk/listen or patch-in that the activated device supports. If it includes such verification features, the monitoring center shall be requested to utilize them and report the

GENERAL ORDER
FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT



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findings to DPSC.

2. DPSC dispatchers shall, on the basis of the event priority, dispatch appropriate fire and rescue and police units in accordance with existing general orders and DPSC standard operating procedures.
- D. Requests for Response to Property Protection/Asset Theft MSD Activation
1. On receipt of a request for response to a property protection/asset theft MSD activation, the DPSC call taker shall determine whether or not the monitoring center has verified that a crime has or is occurring. If the monitoring center cannot verify a crime or other emergency has or is occurring, the request for dispatch shall not be accepted. The DPSC call taker shall inform the monitoring center to verify the MSD activation through the listen-in, talk/listen, or patch-in features, if available, or through telephonic contact with the MSD user.
 2. On receipt of a request for response to a verified MSD activation, the DPSC call taker shall obtain all available information from the monitoring center. This includes whether or not the vehicle or other protected asset is mobile. The MSD user must provide verification either to the monitoring center or to DPSC that the vehicle or asset has been stolen or disturbed prior to acceptance of a request for response to the MSD activation.
 3. DPSC dispatchers shall, on the basis of the event priority, dispatch appropriate fire and rescue and police units in accordance with existing general orders and DPSC standard operating procedures.
 4. The DPSC call taker shall determine what verification methods, such as listen-in, talk/listen, patch-in or telephonic contact that the activated MSD system supports. If the MSD system includes such verification features, the monitoring center shall be requested to utilize them and report the findings to DPSC. The monitoring center will be requested to provide continuous updates regarding the location of a moving target.

GENERAL ORDER
FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT



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VI. RESPONSE TO MSD ACTIVATIONS

- A. Utilization of emergency equipment during response will be in compliance with General Order 501.1.
- B. Response to an ACN will normally be to a fixed location and should be considered as a response to a motor vehicle crash.
- C. Responses to a manual activation device or a property protection/asset theft MSD activation have all the inherent problems of alarms in fixed premises plus the added feature that they may continue to move after activation. This possibility presents unique problems for responding officers. Officers should recognize GPS coordinates are currently accurate to within 100 yards.

The verification process utilized by the monitoring center should provide responding officers information regarding the nature of the crime; for example, stolen auto or car jacking. The assigned officers must carefully coordinate their response which may include, as necessary, a felony vehicle stop.

VII. DOCUMENTATION

Reporting of responses to MSD activations shall be in compliance with the provisions of the Report Writing Manual and general orders. Events that are classified as false activations shall be closed as 10-99U and not be cleared with the 10-98 code.

This general order becomes effective July 1, 2010 and rescinds all previous rules and regulations pertaining to the subject.

ISSUED BY:

Handwritten signature of the Chief of Police.

Chief of Police

APPROVED BY

Handwritten signature of the County Executive.

County Executive