


FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT  GENERAL ORDER	SUBJECT: ALARM AND MOBILE SECURITY DEVICE ACTIVATION RESPONSES		NUMBER: 520
	EFFECTIVE DATE: August 11, 2022	REVIEW: August, 2025	
RESPONSIBLE ENTITY: FALSE ALARM REDUCTION UNIT			<input type="checkbox"/> New Directive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Replaces: 520.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Revised:
ACCREDITATION STANDARDS	CALEA:	VLEPSC: OPR. 01.01 ADM. 24.02	

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to provide guidelines and procedures for officers who respond to alarm and Mobile Security Device (MSD) activations.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) to ensure that officers respond to security alarm activations in an organized, coordinated, and timely manner. A synchronized response to alarm activations promotes the safety of both officers and members of the general public and increases the possibility that potential offenders are apprehended in an efficient manner. Alarm activations may be transmitted to the Department of Public Safety Communications (DPSC) by commercial alarm companies, automatic dialing devices, nearby individuals, or officers in the field. Similarly, MSD activations can involve life threatening or personal protection emergency situations and typically are initiated by either automatic collision notifications (vehicle crashes) or manual activation (personal safety devices). In regards to personal property or asset theft MSD activations, the Department shall only respond to verified activations.

III. DEFINITIONS

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

- C. Listen-In: 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 device that allows the user to manually initiate an alarm system. These devices include integrated devices, such as keypads, and single function devices such as panic buttons, which are mounted and often hard-wired in a fixed location related to the rest of the MSD system.
- E. Mobile Security Devices: Those security devices, or a combination of devices, that are mobile in nature. They may be installed in motor vehicles, other conveyances, or carried by pedestrians and are used for personal safety purposes and/or asset protection. The devices transmit assistance requests to monitoring centers, also known as MSD systems.
- F. Monitoring Center: Physical place where MSD monitoring is conducted.
- G. MSD Request for Response: A request for a law enforcement response to activation of a 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, or organization of any kind which either uses or is in control of any MSD unit.
- I. MSD Verification: Attempt to obtain validation of an emergency or dispatchable condition by on-site inspection, audio, video, or other electronic confirmation.
- J. Patch-In: Mode of MSD monitoring where the operator, user, and Department of Public Safety Communications personnel are connected in a three-way call configuration and all parties can speak and hear each other simultaneously.
- 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 activations do not include instances where life-threatening circumstances exist.
- L. Talk/Listen: Mode of MSD monitoring where both the operator and MSD user can speak and hear simultaneously (similar to a normal telephone conversation).

IV. GENERAL PROCEDURES

- A. **Department of Public Safety Communications:** The Department of Public Safety Communications (DPSC) processes alarm activation information as received to ensure it is properly classified. Where an alarm company advises that an actual crime is in progress, the event will be updated appropriately by DPSC. DPSC classifies alarm activations into the following categories:
1. Unknown Alarm
 2. Automatic Dial Up
 3. Bank Burglary/Hold-Up Alarm
 4. Commercial Burglary/Hold-Up Alarm
 5. Domestic Violence Alarm
 6. Residential Burglary/Panic Alarm
 7. Station Phone Monitor
 8. School Alarm
- B. **Burglary Alarms:** Per the [Fairfax County Code of Ordinances](#), alarm monitoring companies must verify received alarm signals with the exception of duress or hold-up alarms. This requires the company to contact the alarm user or premises prior to requesting police dispatch, which is then verified by DPSC call takers. Upon receipt of a burglary alarm, DPSC call takers shall enter all available information into the event and, on the basis of event priority, dispatch appropriate units to investigate.
- C. **Bank Alarms:** Upon receipt of a bank hold-up alarm, the DPSC call taker shall enter all available information into an event and attempt to make contact with the location to confirm the situation. Where it is verified that criminal activity is in progress, the event will be immediately updated to reflect the nature of the crime in progress.
- D. **GPS Directional Activation Alarm:** Upon receipt of a GPS directional activation alarm, the Police Liaison Commander (PLC), or DPSC supervisor if the PLC is unavailable, shall monitor the alarm. Police units shall be dispatched directly to the bank to render aid and provide updated suspect information and direction of travel. Simulcasts shall be broadcasted via the police radio and to adjacent jurisdictions.
- D. **Station Phone Monitor Alarms:** Upon receipt of a station phone monitor alarm, the DPSC call taker shall enter all available information into an event and stay on the line with station personnel, adding supplements as necessary, until police units can respond to investigate the circumstances.

- E. **Other Alarms:** Upon receipt of all other alarm activations, the DPSC call taker shall enter all available information into an event and dispatch appropriate police units to investigate the circumstances. Responding units may request a DPSC call taker to contact the location in order to ascertain the circumstances of the situation and update the event accordingly. Where it is verified that criminal activity is in progress, the event will be immediately updated to reflect the nature of the crime in progress.

V. **RESPONSES TO ALARMS**

- A. **Patrol Responses:** The utilization of emergency equipment during alarm response shall be in accordance with [FCPD General Order 503](#), Response Driving. Where it is established any suspect(s) have left the location, officers shall broadcast known lookout information via the police radio.
- B. **Major Crimes Bureau Responses:** Upon confirmation that a bank robbery occurred, available Major Crimes Bureau (MCB) units in the vicinity shall proceed to the location unless otherwise directed by a supervisor.

VI. **RESPONSE TO MOBILE SECURITY DEVICES**

- A. The use of, and response to, activations of MSDs are not subject to the provisions of Chapter 8.1 of the Fairfax County Code of Ordinances or reporting provisions outlined below in Section VII.
- B. **Officer Response to MSD Activations:** Officers shall respond to confirmed MSD activations in a timely manner and with due regard for the safety of all individuals.
 - 1. **ACN Responses:** Responses to ACNs will normally be to fixed locations and shall be approached as a response to a motor vehicle crash.
 - 2. **Manual Activation Devices/Property Protection Asset Theft MSD Responses:** Responses to Manual Activation Devices or Property Protection Devices shall be approached as responses to alarm activations, however, these activations will be often transitory in nature and not at a fixed location. Officers should be mindful that GPS coordinates can have ranges over 100 yards, and should coordinate their responses with due regard for safety.
- C. **Documentation:** Officers shall document their responses to MSD activations in accordance with the FCPD Report Writing Manual. False activations should be closed with a field disposition of “**10-99U.**”

VII. DOCUMENTATION

- A. **Officer Responsibilities:** Where alarm activations are due to actual or attempted criminal activity, the event type shall be changed to the appropriate classification (e.g., burglary, domestic violence, open doors, robbery) and an incident report shall be completed in the current Records Management System (RMS).
1. For directional activation alarms, all false and/or accidental activations shall be documented in an incident report and forwarded to MCB-Robbery Squad.
 2. Alarm activations due to unusual environmental circumstances (e.g., high winds, heavy rain) may be closed with a field disposition of “**970.**”
 3. Subsequent to investigation, motor vehicle alarms shall either be reclassified and submitted in an incident report or closed with a field disposition of “**99U.**”
 4. All other security alarm responses shall be closed with a field disposition of “**97A**” in accordance with the following circumstances:
 - a. **Billable Alarms:** Where an (1) individual is on-scene, (2) the alarm activation was caused by malfunction, (3) no individual is on scene, (4) the location is secure, or (5) any other circumstances (ex: contractor, cleaning crew, unknown), the incident shall be closed “**97A-FALSE ALARM-BILLABLE.**” Officers should capture the on-scene individual’s name and date of birth and enter this information into the event using their Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) terminal.
 - b. **Non-Billable Alarms:** Where alarm activation is due to unusual environmental conditions (ex: electrical storm, unusually high winds), officers may close the event “**970-FALSE ALARM-OTHER NON-BILLABLE,**” and enter the circumstances into their CAD.
- B. **False Alarm Reduction Unit Procedures:** FARU shall be responsible for monitoring compliance with the [Fairfax County Code of Ordinances](#) as it pertains to security alarm activations. Where significant alarm levels are attained, FARU shall track suspense dates for required inspections and permit the printing of alarm reports generated through DPSC.

1. The FARU supervisor shall generate correspondence for administrative service fees and forward weekly reconciliation reports to the Financial Resources Division (FRD). The FARU supervisor shall also serve as an administrative hearing officer for purposes outlined in the [Fairfax County Code of Ordinances](#).

VIII. LEGAL REFERENCES

- A. [Fairfax County Code of Ordinances § 8.1-3-7](#), Alarm company procedures to request police assistance.

General Order 520 becomes effective on the above date and rescinds all previous rules and regulations pertaining to the subject.

ISSUED BY:



Chief of Police

APPROVED BY:



County Executive