



Peterborough Police Service

Verified Alarm Response Program

General Order AI-084

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1.0 Policy

- 1.1 In an attempt to reduce the number of false alarms across the jurisdictions policed by The Peterborough Police Service, the Verified Alarm Response Program (VARP) has been created.
- 1.2 This Procedure is intended to eliminate as many property related false alarms as possible and outlines the process under which the VARP may be employed.
- 1.3 Members shall recognize that panic alarms related to the safety of a person are excluded from the VARP.

2.0 Definitions

- 2.1 **Alarm Administrator** is a person appointed by the Chief of Police to administer the Alarm Response Procedure, as outlined within a relevant job description through the Records Management Department

- 2.2 **Alarm Agency** is a person or company who, for hire or other reward, sells or supplies or installs or offers to install alarm systems; monitors alarms systems by means of a monitoring device; repairs or maintains alarm systems that are installed on the property of another.
- 2.3 **Alarm System** is 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.
- 2.4 **Alarm User/Customer** is a person who uses an alarm system to protect any building, structure, facility or premises, or who pays funds to an Alarm Agency to have their system monitored.
- 2.5 **Cancelled Alarm** means an alarm incident that has been received by the Peterborough Police Service, entered into the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system for the purposes of an Officer response, and prior to the arrival of any Officer to the premises, is cancelled by the Alarm Agency or User/Customer.
- 2.6 **False Alarm** is an alarm that prompts a police response to a premise where an emergency or criminal offence does not exist.
- 2.7 **Multiple Activations Points** is when more than one point of the alarm system are activated simultaneously or in a logical sequence.
- 2.8 **Panic Alarm** includes a panic alarm, hold-up alarm or a duress alarm, and is an alert of an emergency situation in which a threat to a person exists.
- 2.9 **Police Service or Service** means the Peterborough Police Service.
- 2.10 **Valid Alarm** is an alarm signal activated when someone who is not authorized to enter a premise has breached any barriers in place that are intended to prohibit entry.
- 2.11 **Verified Alarm** is an alarm where confirmation that an apparent criminal offence has been or is taking place, as determined by a key holder, witness, security guard, alarm agency employee, or real time monitor.

3.0 Registration of Alarm Systems and Expectations

- 3.1 Every Alarm Agency and User/Customer that requires an alarm response from the Service is required to adhere to the terms and conditions of the Board by-law, this Procedure, and ensure all provided information is accurate and up to date.
- 3.2 Every Alarm Agency or User/Customer that requires an alarm response from the Service shall register their Alarm System with the Service.

- 3.3 Every application for registration shall contain, at minimum, the following;
- 1) The name, address and phone number of the alarm agency responsible for monitoring the alarm system;
 - 2) The name, phone number, and email address of a contact person at the alarm agency responsible for monitoring the alarm system;
 - 3) The correct business or residential address for the alarm system and owner contact information;
 - 4) The correct and up to date key holder contact information;
 - 5) The Alarm Agency customer number or account number for the alarm system;
 - 6) Payment of the applicable registration fee outlined in Schedule "A".
- 3.4 Every Alarm Agency that submits a registration shall ensure the information provided to the Service is accurate and shall notify the Alarm Administrator forthwith, in writing, of any changes.
- 3.5 Alarm Agencies are expected to provide appropriate instructions to their clients on the proper use and maintenance of their alarm systems, in order to minimize false alarms.
- 3.6 The fee to register an alarm system as provided in Schedule "A" of this Procedure is due at the time of registration.
- 3.7 Any additional fees administered under this Procedure are payable upon receipt of any invoice issued by the Service.
- 3.8 The Alarm Administrator shall enter the alarm system in the Service's alarm database upon receipt of registration and payment.
- 3.9 A registration shall be issued in the name of the registering Alarm Agency. A registration shall not be reassigned or transferred.
- 3.10 In the event a registered alarm system requires reassignment or transfer to a new Alarm Agency, User/Customer, or address, a new registration is required, along with payment of applicable fees as outlined in Schedule "A".
- 3.11 A copy of this Procedure will be provided to each subscriber at the time of registration by the Alarm Agency.
- 3.12 Alarm Users/Customers who choose not to subscribe to an Alarm Agency monitoring station will be required to register directly with the Service, and are subject to all the terms contained herein.

- 3.13 Current Alarm Agencies and Users/Customers registered with the Service on the date this Procedure takes effect are not obligated to re-register with the Service, however they are subject to all other conditions contained herein.

4.0 Panic/Hold Up/Duress Alarm Response

- 4.1 The Peterborough Police Service shall provide immediate response to panic/hold-up/duress alarms when there is reason to believe that a crime is in progress or an emergency exists. Verification of a panic alarm is not required as the safety of the community is paramount.
- 4.2 It is the responsibility of the Alarm Agency or User/Customer to notify Communications & Dispatch that a panic alarm has been engaged.

5.0 Verified Alarm Response

- 5.1 As the VARP is intended to eliminate as many property related false alarms as possible, members will only be dispatched when alarms meet one or more of the verification criteria, outlined below.
- 5.2 Verification of alarms must occur prior to notifying the Service. It is the responsibility of the Alarm Agency or User/Customer to verify the legitimacy of an alarm using at least one of the following verification criteria:
- 1) Audio sensors that provide the Alarm Agency or User/Customer with the ability to confirm criminal activity by the sounds detected within the premise;
 - 2) A video system that provides the Alarm Agency or User/Customer with the ability to confirm criminal activity through visual images;
 - 3) Confirmation made by an owner, key holder, an alternate response agency, or a witness on scene who can confirm the existence of a suspected criminal act; or
 - 4) Multiple activation points and the alarm agency or monitoring system determines the manner or sequence of activation indicates that suspected criminal activity is, or has taken place.
- 5.3 911 Communicators shall confirm with the alarm company or monitoring service how the alarm was verified as Members will only be dispatched when alarms meet one or more of the verification criteria above.
- 5.4 In situations where the Alarm Agency or User/Customer cannot verify the legitimacy of an alarm, the Service shall not respond unless the decision to respond is overridden by a Communications Supervisor.

6.0 Calls for Service to Unregistered Alarm

- 6.1 Calls for service to an alarmed premises made by an Alarm Agency who is not registered in this program will not be accepted by the Service, until the Service is contacted directly by the Alarm User/Customer.
- 6.2 In circumstances where a call for service to an alarmed premises is received directly from an unregistered Alarm User/Customer, and the Service elects to attend, the Alarm User/Customer is subject to all relevant fees associated with the Board's by-law and this Procedure.

7.0 False and Cancelled Alarms**7.1 Registered Premise**

- 1) Where the Service is required to respond to an alarm incident that is determined to be a false alarm, the Registered Alarm Agency or Registered User/Customer, as the case may be, shall be sent an invoice for the amount identified in Schedule "A" of this Procedure for a false alarm.
- 2) Where the Service is contacted to respond to an alarm incident, and prior to the arrival of Officers to the premise the alarm incident is cancelled by the Agency or User/Customer, the Registered Alarm Agency or Registered User/Customer, as the case may be, shall be sent an invoice for the amount identified in Schedule "A" of this Procedure for a cancelled alarm.

7.2 Non-Registered Premise

- 1) Where the Service is required to respond to an alarm incident that is determined to be a false alarm, and the address is unregistered, the property owner shall be sent an invoice for the amount identified in Schedule "A" of this Procedure for a false alarm and a registration fee.
- 2) Where the Service is required to respond to an alarm incident of an unregistered alarm system, and prior to the arrival of Officers to the premise the alarm incident is cancelled by the caller, the property owner shall be sent an invoice for the amount identified in Schedule "A" of this Procedure for a cancelled alarm and a registration fee.

7.3 Unpaid Invoice

- 1) Where an invoice submitted above remains unpaid for sixty (60) days or more, the Chief of Police shall forthwith suspend service to the address

and provide written notice of the suspension to the Alarm Agency or User/Customer.

- 2) Suspension of Service may be lifted upon payment of any outstanding invoice plus a Reinstatement Fee, as outlined in Schedule "A".

8.0 Responsibilities

8.1 Alarm Agency or User/Customer shall:

- 1) At the time of registration, ensure that the information provided to the Service is accurate. Should the information change, the Alarm Administrator shall be notified forthwith, in writing, of any changes.
- 2) When requesting the Service to respond to an alarm incident:
 - a) Provide at minimum, the following information:
 - i) The correct business or residential address for the requested call for service
 - ii) The correct business or residence owner contact information.
 - iii) Up to date key holder information
 - iv) Alarm agency customer number or account number
 - v) The name, address and phone number of the alarm agency responsible for monitoring the alarm system;
 - vi) The name, phone number, and email address of a contact person at the alarm agency responsible for monitoring the alarm system;
 - vii) How the alarm was verified.
 - b) Adhere to the terms and conditions of the Peterborough Police Services Board Bylaw, as referenced in Appendix "A" of this policy including paying all applicable fees for false and cancelled alarms.

8.2 Communications & Dispatch:

- 1) Communicators shall dispatch officers to all occurrences involving panic/hold up/duress alarms.
- 2) When a call for an Alarm has been received, shall enquire whether the alarm has been verified. If there has been no attempt to verify the alarm, the Communications member shall instruct the Alarm Agency or User/Customer to verify the alarm and subsequently contact the Service if police are required;

- 3) Members may dispatch officers to an unverified alarm if they believe a response is warranted, upon the approval of the Communications Supervisor or Officer-In-Charge of the station;
- 4) Members shall not:
 - a) Telephone key holders, Alarm Agencies or Users/Customers to determine if a key holder has been notified of the alarm; and
 - b) Attempt to verify alarm calls. This is the function of the alarm companies and monitoring services.
 - c) Accept a call for service from an unregistered Alarm Agency until the Alarm User/Customer contacts the Service directly. Discretion as to whether the Service will attend is up to the Communications Supervisor.

8.3 Responding Members

- 1) Verified alarms and panic/hold up/duress alarms shall be dispatched and investigated in accordance with policy LE-002 – Communications and Dispatch, [LE-006 – Criminal Investigation and Major Case Management](#), and [LE-042 - Robbery](#)
- 2) For a false alarm, members shall state in their clearing the cause of the false alarm as being either user error, system error or unknown error.
- 3) For cancelled alarms, members shall state in the clearing the name of the representative of the Alarm Agency or User/Customer who cancelled the call.

8.4 Supervisors

- 1) The Officer-in-Charge, or a Patrol Sergeant, may override a verified response decision based on the circumstances and information received regarding an alarm occurrence and the reasons for the decision shall be recorded in their notebook.

8.5 Alarm Administrator

- 1) Duties of the Alarm Administrator may include but are not limited to:
 - a) Receiving Alarm Agency/User registrations;
 - b) Maintaining up to date Agency/User and address information;
 - c) Accepting and processing relevant fees;
 - d) Preparing and distributing invoices to Agencies and Users;
 - e) Tracking false alarms and, other relevant alarm data/statistics;

- f) Maintaining and tracking service agreements; and,
- g) Providing Agencies/Users with relevant documentation relating to this program.

8.6 Inspector Support Services

- 1) The Inspector in Charge of Support Services shall cause a review of the Verified Alarm Response Program annually after the completion of the calendar year, for effectiveness and compliance, and report to the Chief, or their designate, the results of the review within the first 60 days of the following year.

This General Order shall become effective this 1st day of March 2024.

Stuart Betts, Chief of Police

9.0 Appendix A – Fees and Charges for Alarm Services

To Peterborough Police Service Board by-law ###-2024

All funds below are in Canadian Dollars and subject to HST

Alarm Registration (new)	\$150.00
Alarm Registration (amendment)	\$100.00
False Alarm	\$150.00
Cancelled Alarm	\$ 75.00
Suspension Reinstatement Fee	\$300.00