

## REGIONAL STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

# ALARM ACTIVATIONS

#: 107.05

REV: 04 /2015

**SCOPE:** This procedure shall apply to companies responding to alarm activations including commercial fire alarms and residential fire public assists.

**PURPOSE:** To serve as a guide when responding to fire alarm incidents.

**SAFETY:** While operating on alarm activations, safe driving must be practiced at all times. Proper PPE and respiratory protection shall be worn at discretion of the company officer.

### PROCEDURE:

#### B. Commercial Fire Alarm Response

The initial response to still fire alarms will include a single engine or ladder company, Code One (two companies on the Fort Huachuca military installation). In instances where additional information has been received by dispatch that results in a higher index of suspicion, a full structural response is warranted.

#### C. Investigation

The responding unit should first access the panel or enunciator and attempt to determine which initiating device caused the alarm. A thorough investigation of the facility is essential to ensure the alarm is only a nuisance alarm. Trouble and supervisory alarms should also be investigated to identify the cause.

#### D. Documentation

All fire alarm responses shall be documented and entered into the approved software program database by the company officer; after which the appropriate Prevention representative should be notified.

## **E. Fire Watch**

Incidents at commercial occupancies that require the alarm system to be disarmed, silenced, or otherwise placed out of service will require the facility to perform fire watch procedures. The initial responding unit is responsible to ensure the owner/manager of the business is aware of the fire watch requirement. The company officer or prevention officer will give the responsible party a copy of the "fire watch procedures" document and instruct the party to follow the guidelines listed. All out of service fire alarm systems should be reported to the jurisdiction's fire marshal or appropriate designee as soon as possible. The fire marshal/designee will follow up to ensure repairs are made in a timely manner.

## **F. False Alarms**

False alarms include the intentional false reporting of an emergency or purposeful initiation of a fire alarm when no signs of fire are present. False alarms should be investigated and documented thoroughly. In the event of involvement of a minor in initiating a false alarm, the minor may be referred to the Youth Fire-setter Program at the company officer's discretion. Law enforcement assistance should be requested as needed.

## **F. Public Assist**

Requests for assistance concerning residential smoke and carbon monoxide detectors will be handled in a timely, professional manner.

1. Nuisance residential alarms- Fire personnel should investigate and rule out fire as a result of the alarm. Personnel should then assist the resident by vacuuming or blowing clean detector unit sensors. This will often fix units that are alarming for no apparent reason. If the unit continues to alarm after cleaning, the unit may need to be replaced. Residents should be informed to check the warranty. Units older than 10 years should also be replaced as soon as possible. If the entire alarm system becomes out of service for any reason, personnel should temporarily install battery only units until the system can be restored with electrically powered units.
2. Low Battery Alerts- Low battery alerts produce a characteristic "chirp" designed to notify the occupants of the low battery situation. Fire personnel will perform battery replacement as needed. Some units will "chirp" to notify the occupant that the detector is past its shelf life, in which case the unit will need to be replaced.
3. Smoke Detector Installation- The fire department will provide and install battery-only smoke detectors in older, site-built and manufactured homes that do not otherwise have smoke detectors in place. Personnel shall not install

battery only units in homes that are served with an electrical smoke alarm system. As mentioned in item 1, battery units may be temporarily installed until the original system is placed back in service.

4. In cases where the cause of malfunction cannot be identified and when installation of new smoke detectors requires new wiring, the homeowner shall be instructed to seek the assistance of a qualified electrician.
5. Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detectors - For response to CO incidents, refer to Regional SOP 105.07.

#### **D. Waiver of Liability**

Personnel will obtain a signed smoke detector waiver of liability form when installing units or changing batteries. Signed originals will be forwarded to the appropriate Prevention representative.