

**SENECA FALLS POLICE DEPARTMENT  
GENERAL ORDER**

<b>General Order:</b> 550	<b>Rescinds:</b> New Issue
<b>Subject:</b> Alarm Response and Reporting	<b>NYS Accreditation:</b>
<b>Effective Date:</b> 07/01/13 <b>By Order Of:</b> Stuart W. Peenstra, Chief of Police	

**I. PURPOSE**

To establish a policy and procedures for the proper response to, and reporting of, alarm calls.

**II. BACKGROUND**

The Seneca Falls Police Department recognizes the importance of protecting and promoting the health, safety, and general welfare of Seneca Falls residents by reducing the number of avoidable alarms that emergency agencies respond to. Avoidable alarms contribute to ineffective utilization of public safety personnel and equipment. In addition, avoidable alarms require emergency responses, which may contribute to an increased accident rate and delay responses to genuine emergencies.

**III. DEFINITIONS**

- A.** Alarm System - A device or an assembly of equipment that emits an audible response which is intended to alert persons outside a premises to the existence of a hazard or emergency, or which is intended to alert emergency agencies by automatically dialing such agency, or which is connected to a private answering point for the purpose of reporting such alarms to emergency agencies, or which is directly connected to an emergency agency.
- B.** Alarm User - Any person who owns, leases, or uses an alarm system within the Town of Seneca Falls, except for a person whose alarm system is on a motor vehicle, or is a proprietary system. However, if a motor vehicle alarm system is connected with an alarm system at a premise (other than a proprietary system) the person using such system is an alarm user.
- C.** Avoidable alarm
  - 1. The activation of an alarm system through mechanical failure, malfunction, improper installation, or negligence of the owner, user, custodian, or lessee of an alarm system (including employees or agents), AND said activation causes a notification to an emergency agency through a direct connection, or by a private answering point, or automatic dialing device, or by any second party or means, WHICH indicates that an emergency situation exists requiring a response within the town when, in fact, an emergency situation does not exist.
  - 2. Avoidable alarm also includes the knowing or intentional activation of an alarm to an emergency agency when the activator knows that an emergency situation does not exist.
  - 3. Avoidable alarm does not include alarms activated by violent conditions of nature or severe weather conditions such as violent electrical storms with high winds, electrical power outages, known electrical surges, or any other similar cause beyond the control of the user of the alarm system.

4. Activation of an alarm system under any circumstances in which the activator reasonably believes that an emergency situation exists is not an avoidable alarm.
  5. Notwithstanding any language to the contrary, the defective installation of an alarm system, the failure to repair or cause an alarm system to be repaired, or the use of defective equipment in connection with an alarm system shall not constitute an extraordinary circumstance beyond the reasonable condition of the alarm user.
- D. Proprietary Alarm System** - An alarm sounding and/or recording within the premises protected by such alarm, with the control center being under the supervision of the proprietor of the protected premises, WHEN such alarm is not intended to alert persons outside of the premises on which the alarm system is located that a possible hazard exists, AND when such alarm is not intended to alert an emergency agency. If a proprietary alarm system includes a signal line connected directly, or by means of an automatic device, to an emergency agency, private answering point, or a local alarm system, it thereby becomes an "alarm system" as defined in this order.

#### **IV. POLICY**

The Seneca Falls Police Department has the responsibility for responding to all alarms that members are dispatched to or if the alarm is reported directly to the member.

#### **V. RESPONSE PROCEDURES FOR GENERAL ALARMS**

**A.** Responding officers shall:

1. Respond to all alarms pursuant to current directives and training.
2. Complete a Incident Report in Spillman.

The officer will make every effort to identify the alarm user and indicate this information on the report.

*\*NOTE:* The officer may use discretion when there is no crime but the alarm is not avoidable, such as violent conditions of nature, or the user reasonably believed an emergency existed.

3. Upon completion of the Incident Report, the officer will close the assignment by entering "False Alarm" if no crime has occurred.
4. If members respond to a fire, water-flow or emergency medical alarm, officers shall document on an Incident Report pursuant to policy or closed with the appropriate action code, i.e. routine sickness, referred to other jurisdiction, or public utility notified, etc.

**B.** Upon supervisory approval, officers may take appropriate action to disable or deactivate all local alarm signals (non- fire related) which have not silenced within a 30-minute period.

1. Officers will first exhaust all reasonable means of locating the alarm user and allow them an opportunity to respond before disabling or deactivating the alarm.
2. If unable to locate the alarm user, the officer will contact the user as soon as possible to advise that the alarm has been disabled or deactivated.
3. If the user or other responsible person is not located during his tour of duty, the officer will request the on- coming platoon supervisor to make the notification.
4. After deactivation, special attention will be given to the premise until the owner is notified.
5. Officers may contact the Fire Department to assist with disabling or deactivating an alarm.

## **VI. RESPONSE PROCEDURES FOR BANK ROBBERY ALARMS**

### **A. The Seneca County 911 Dispatcher will:**

1. Dispatch one primary unit and one backup unit to the reporting bank and other backup units as necessary to the general area to cover escape routes and assist as necessary.
2. Assign only uniformed personnel as primary units.
3. Call the bank to verify the alarm.
4. Assume that the alarm is legitimate if the phone is not answered or if the appropriate code and number are not given.
5. Immediately inform responding units of updated information.
6. Control radio use to include response units only.

### **B. Patrol Personnel**

1. Responding units will not use sirens when in close proximity to bank alarm locations.
2. Other units will limit their radio usage to essential transmissions until the alarm is cleared.
3. The primary unit and the backup unit approaching the vicinity of the bank will visually check the area for suspect accomplices.
4. Responding units will not confront or attempt to apprehend robbery suspects until they have left the bank building.
5. Plainclothes personnel will remain on the outer perimeter until the first uniformed officer has entered the bank and shall not otherwise approach the facility unless they have announced their presence to the primary officer and are wearing identification conspicuously on their outermost garment.
6. Vehicles will be parked in such a manner as to attempt to avoid being detected by bank occupants.
7. All responding units will await confirmation from the dispatcher regarding the nature of the alarm and suspect information before foot approach.
8. After dispatcher confirmation, members will wait until the appropriate code (per training) is observed in the bank entrance doors. Officers may then enter and contact bank personnel.
9. If the appropriate code is not displayed, members will advise the dispatcher and maintain a position to monitor the bank. The primary unit will call for a supervisor.
10. All responding units will allow suspects to exit the bank before attempting an apprehension.
11. No comments will be made over the police radio which would reveal the security system (per training) or telephone call back-up.

### **C. False/Accidental Alarms**

After determination of a false/accidental bank alarm, the assigned officer will complete an Incident Report and indicate why the alarm was set off.