OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

SPECIAL ORDER NO. 2 **January 22, 2004**

SUBJECT: BURGLAR ALARM DISPATCHING

EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 1, 2004

PURPOSE: The Department dispatches nearly 136,000 burglar alarm calls each year which constitutes about 15 percent of our patrol workload. However, numerous studies have shown that 92 percent of those calls are false. Several years ago, the Police Commission decided to lower the response priority for burglar alarms to reduce their burden on emergency services. False burglar alarms continue to inhibit our response to emergency calls as well as our involvement in police/community problem solving efforts.

Recently, the Police Commission reviewed this issue and determined that after the first two false alarms at any given location in a rolling year (a twelve month period starting with each false alarm activation), the Department shall dispatch only to a **verified** burglar alarm at that location. This approach will provide more efficient and effective use of our Department's personnel resources, allow for quicker response time to higher priority calls for service, and enhance public safety. This Order revises the Department's procedure for dispatching to burglar alarm activations. Nothing in this Order affects the dispatching of robbery or panic alarms.

PROCEDURE:

I. **VERIFIED BURGLAR ALARM - DEFINED.** A **verified** burglar alarm is an alarm activation where an unauthorized entry or attempted unauthorized entry upon the premises, building, or structure protected by the system, has been independently verified. Verification shall be accomplished by a confirmation by the alarm system user or other person at or near the scene of the activation, a private guard responder or alarm company operator. Verification shall be based on a physical observation or inspection of the premises, or by remote visual inspection of the premises.

Note: An open door, broken window, or other activity consistent with a burglary is considered a verified activation.

II. **COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION RESPONSIBILITY.** Communications Division shall request the State Alarm Company Operator (ACO) permit numbers when alarm companies call to request LAPD dispatch. If no ACO number is available, the alarm company name shall be obtained.

Note: This procedure shall apply to all Department employees receiving information regarding a burglar alarm activation (e.g., front desk, Area Command Center (ACC), etc).

A. **Dispatch procedures for the first two false alarm activations.** The Department shall maintain its current dispatch policy with respect to the first two false alarm activations within a rolling year, at any given location.

B. **Dispatch procedures for false alarm activations in excess of two per rolling year.** After two false alarm activations within a rolling year, at any given location, the Department will require verification of each subsequent alarm before dispatching a unit. In the event verification is unavailable, the Department will broadcast the alarm notification and file it, if no unit accepts the call. For example, an unverified burglar alarm call will be broadcast and remain in the dispatcher's queue for a few minutes. If a unit accepts the call, it will be assigned to that unit for handling. Otherwise, the call will be closed without assigning a unit to handle.

When Communications Division is notified of a burglar alarm activation, it shall determine if the person reporting (PR) observed any activity consistent with a burglary at the alarmed location. The PR shall **not** be asked to return to the location and look for evidence of criminal activity.

Exception: Verification is not required for a burglar alarm activation at a location monitored by the Department or Communications Division (e.g., City Council offices and temporary alarms monitored by Burglary Auto Theft Division). Verification is also not required at premises, buildings or facilities controlled or monitored by federal, state, or local

agencies, or the location of a licensed firearms business.

A verified burglar alarm shall be dispatched as a high priority call. Officers shall be provided information on how the activation was verified.

C. **Firearms Business.** It is the responsibility of the person reporting to notify the Department when an alarm is activated at a firearms business. Communications Division will maintain a current list (Special Locations File) of all Firearms and Ammunition Permits issued by the Police Commission. Communications Division shall audit this file each January to ensure that the information is current.

D. **False Alarm Tracking.** Communications Division shall track false alarm activations at the given location, and count such contacts on a rolling annual basis.

Note: A false alarm activation shall expire after one year, and shall be purged from the database at that time.

III. **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES BUREAU (ICSB) RESPONSIBILITY.** Information and Communications Services Bureau shall work with Information Technology Agency (ITA) to ensure that the proper systems and databases are modified to track all false alarm activations at any given location. A system shall be established to prompt the dispatcher to verify an alarm activation, when necessary.

IV. **OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITY.** Officers dispatched to a burglar alarm call shall conduct an investigation in accordance with current Department procedures (Department Manual Section 4/203.60). If the alarm is false or the officer's investigation determines that the alarm was erroneously reported as a verified alarm or firearms business, the officer shall record that information on his/her Daily Field Activities Report, Form 15.52, Mobile Digital Terminal and Alarm Notification Card, Form 2.90, and inform Communications Division of their findings.

Note: Watch Commanders and supervisors should encourage officers to respond to unverified burglar alarm calls in

their Basic Car Area whenever possible, or when an available unit is in the area of an unverified burglar alarm call.

V. **COMMISSION INVESTIGATION DIVISION'S (CID) RESPONSIBILITY.** Commission Investigation Division shall continue to enforce the provisions of the Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 103.206, Alarm Ordinance, and follow-up on any alarm that is misrepresented as "verified" or involving a firearms business. Commission Investigation Division shall also ensure that Communications Division is made aware of any change in the Firearms and Ammunition Police Permits issued by CID.

AMENDMENTS: This Order amends Sections 2/170.02, 2/170.03, 4/120.40 and 4/203.60 of the Department Manual.

AUDIT RESPONSIBILITY: The Commanding Officer, Commission Investigation Division, shall monitor compliance with this directive in accordance with Department Manual Section 0/080.30.

WILLIAM J. BRATTON
Chief of Police

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