



# ALARM – OPEN DOOR RESPONSE

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| <i>Original Date of Issue</i><br><b>February 9, 1999</b>     | <i>General Order Number</i><br><b>99-02</b> |
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| <i>C.A.L.E.A.</i><br><b>1.2.4, 1.2.6, 81.2.13</b>            | <i>Reference</i><br><b>See Index</b>        |

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- Supervisory Responsibility
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- Canine Procedure

## **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to define the responsibilities and duties of officers when they respond to burglar alarms, bank alarms or “open door” calls.

## **II. POLICY**

It is the policy of the Iowa City Police Department to respond to burglar alarms, bank alarms and open door calls in a safe and efficient manner. When responding to these types of calls, they shall be handled in manner which provides maximum safety for the officer and the public. The decision to search a building in these circumstances will be made only after attempting to contact a representative of the building, or when a representative is unavailable, after considering all of the circumstances surrounding the incident. Warrantless searches shall be conducted only if circumstances justifying a warrantless search are present.

### III. DEFINITIONS

### IV. PROCEDURES

#### A. BURGLAR ALARMS

When a member of this department responds to a burglar alarm the officer should respond in a safe and reasonable manner. When approaching the location of the alarm the officer should consider the deactivation of emergency lights and siren if applicable. The officer should be observant for vehicles and/or persons leaving the immediate area. Upon arrival at the scene the officer should not park directly in front of the location from which the alarm is coming, instead they should park down the street from the alarm. The officer should approach the address from as concealed a position as possible. Upon reaching the exterior of the building, the officer should:

1. Check the exterior of the building for possible signs of a break-in. The officer should also check for open doors and monitor the interior of the building for suspicious activity.
2. If there are no obvious signs of forcible entry, the officer should notify the Communications Center [JECC]. The alarm company is responsible for contacting a business representative. Upon receiving notification from the alarm company of the key holder response, JECC should advise the officer if a representative is going to respond. If the representative requests that an officer accompany them into the building, the officer may do so after obtaining approval from a supervisor. When a representative requests an officer to accompany them to inspect a building, an entry shall be made listing the name of the representative as well as their relationship with the property in question. This will not constitute a search.
3. If there are signs of forced entry or attempted entry, officers should secure the perimeter of the building. When available, back-up officer(s) should check the immediate area for possible suspects or other buildings which may have been entered. JECC or the ICPD Stationmaster will contact a representative of the building at the officer's request. The representative shall be requested to come to the location before an officer enters the building. The contact will allow officers the opportunity to determine if anyone would be expected to be in the building. A supervisor should respond to the scene before entry is made.
4. If a building representative cannot be contacted, a supervisor will make the determination whether: 1) officers will enter the building to conduct a search; 2) the building will not be entered and "extra patrol" initiated for the building; and/or, 3) a search warrant will be requested. Extra patrol requests will be forwarded to subsequent watches as applicable. Regardless of the decision to enter or secure the building, the supervisor of the day watch or designee will attempt to contact a building representative the next business day. The building representative will be informed of the date, time and

pertinent details of the incident and be asked for updated business contact information.

5. In instances where the building representative declines to come to the scene, a watch supervisor may authorize a search of the building if the building representative requests and consents to a search.
6. In instances where there is forced or attempted entry, the lead officer shall complete an incident report and any required supplemental reports.

## **B. OPEN DOORS AND WINDOWS**

When an officer comes upon or is made aware of an open door, the following guidelines should be adhered to:

1. The officer(s) will secure the perimeter. At the officer's request, JECC or the ICPD Stationmaster will contact a building representative to come to the location before any officer enters the building.
2. If the building representative cannot be contacted or does not desire to come to the location, the officer(s) will secure the building to the extent possible and initiate an "extra patrol" request for the duration of the watch and subsequent watches as applicable. A member of Day Watch will contact the building representative the next business day. The business representative will be advised of the date and time of the incident and be asked for updated business contact information.

## **C. SEARCH PROCEDURES**

1. If a property representative is not available and there is a reasonable basis on which to conclude that an emergency threat to persons and/or property exists, a supervisor may authorize warrantless entry and search by officers. In the absence of such circumstances, any search must be pursuant to warrant.
2. In instances where the building representative declines to come to the scene, the watch supervisor may authorize a search of the building if the building representative requests and consents to a search. This does not require that the building be searched.
3. When a determination to search is made, with or without the contacting of a property representative, a supervisor should be present at the scene.
4. If a determination is made to search the property, officers should consider requesting an available canine team in assisting with the search. All use of canine teams shall comply with canine policies and procedures.
5. If it is determined that a search will be conducted, officers shall verbally identify themselves as members of the Iowa City Police Department prior to entry. If exigent circumstances exist, this notification may be waived by the supervisor on the scene.

**D. BANK ALARMS**

Officers responding to bank alarms or other financial institutions shall utilize the authorized departmental protocol as identified in the Department's Field Training Manual.

**E. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

1. When assisting an outside agency in their jurisdiction, members of this department will be guided by this policy. Prior to the search of the building, an ICPD watch supervisor should authorize any participation by ICPD officers in the actual building search. The watch supervisor should confirm that the person requesting the search has authority to authorize the search.
2. When the building to be searched is a public building under the control of the City of Iowa City, an attempt to contact the appropriate department head should be made prior to authorizing the search of the building.
3. When a determination is made that an officer will search a building, the officer will make the determination as to whether he/she will draw his/her weapon. If the officer decides to draw his/her weapon, a use of force report will be required only if an individual other than other police officers are encountered. In instances where multiple officers are involved in the search of a building and an individual is encountered, the on-scene supervisor may authorize one Use of Force report for all units present. **IN ALL INSTANCES, ALL OFFICERS SHALL BE GUIDED BY THE DEPARTMENTAL USE OF FORCE POLICY.**

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Denise Brotherton, Interim Chief of Police

**WARNING**

This directive is for departmental use only and does not apply in any criminal or civil proceeding. The department policy should not be construed as a creation of higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third-party claims. Violations of this directive will only form the basis for departmental administrative sanctions.