


<p><b>RABUN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE</b></p>  <p><b>General Order Number: 4.05</b></p>	<p><b>Date of Issue</b></p> <p><b>2/23/2016</b></p>	<p><b>Effective Date</b></p> <p><b>2/23/2016</b></p>	<p><b>Revision Date</b></p>
<p>Subject: <b>ALARM RESPONSE</b></p>	<p>Amends:</p>		<p>Rescinds:</p>
<p>Index as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alarm Response</li> <li>General Policies and Procedures</li> </ul>	<p>State Certification Standards:</p>		
<p>Special Instructions:</p>			

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this General Order is to prescribe the policies and procedures of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office regarding the response of personnel to alarms at residences and businesses.

**STATEMENT OF POLICY**

It shall be the policy of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office that all reports of alarms will be handled by dispatching personnel to the incident scene to verify the situation and to take appropriate follow-up action.

**DISCUSSION**

Many of the alarm calls answered by Rabun County Sheriff's Office personnel will turn out to be a false or unfounded alarm. However, responding personnel must treat every call as if it is an actual situation and be prepared to take action.

**I. BUSINESS / BANK / FINANCIAL INSTITUTION ALARM RESPONSE PROCEDURES**

- A. Rabun County Central Communications will dispatch a marked patrol unit.

- B. If the business/bank/financial institution makes telephone contact with Rabun County Central Communications and confirms that the alarm is an actual situation, Communications will obtain and broadcast the following information to all response units:
1. Complete description and number of the perpetrator(s);
  2. Whether the subjects are still at the scene;
  3. The direction and mode of travel, and complete vehicle description;
  4. Whether the subjects are armed and the types of weapons involved (i.e., handgun, rifle, shotgun, or automatic weapon); and
  5. The existence of any injuries.
- C. If notification is received from an alarm company, Rabun County Central Communications will make no attempt to contact the institution. Contacting the institution is the responsibility of the alarm company. The alarm company will be advised by Rabun County Central Communications that contact with a key holder needs to be made and it is their responsibility to call Rabun County Central Communications back with the information. Rabun County Central Communications will relay all obtained information to the responding unit(s).
- D. If notified alarm is false, the Rabun County Central Communications Center will:
1. Obtain the identity of the caller;
  2. When requested by on-scene personnel, a request will be made through the alarm company that a key employee of the institution (i.e., manager or supervisor) exit the facility and meet with the officer to verify the false alarm;
  3. Obtain the name and physical description of the key employee and instruct the person to carry personal identification with them;
  4. Relay additional instructions to the exiting employee as provided by on-scene personnel; and
  5. Cancel other response units when directed by on-scene personnel.
- E. Officers **shall approach all bank alarm calls as though a robbery is in progress** until verification of the call is complete:
1. Initial response units will be observant of any suspicious vehicles leaving the area as well as other vehicles or persons outside the facility who may be serving as lookouts, cover, or drivers for the robbery team;
  2. Steps must be taken to avoid premature detection upon the arrival of response personnel; and
  3. At night, headlights should be turned off as soon as possible and units should be positioned in unlit or dimly lit areas if possible.

**Note: Detection increases the likelihood that hostages will be taken or that a barricaded suspect situation will develop.**

- F. The first unit on the scene shall serve as the primary response unit and will:
  - 1. Take a position near the building that provides good observation of exits without being easily visible to those inside;
  - 2. Broadcast exact position and any observable conditions at the location to other assisting units;
  - 3. Remain with vehicle or at a suitable defensive position that affords cover and ballistic protection outside the facility; and
  - 4. Coordinate the positioning of other back-up personnel.
- G. Back up personnel shall report their arrival and:
  - 1. Assume defensive positions near the building perimeter, covering other exits and entrances;
  - 2. Prevent any outside personnel from entering the perimeter and building; and
  - 3. If available, additional back-up units should be directed to establish an outer perimeter in order to block traffic from entering the affected area and to cover likely escape routes.
- H. Once the building perimeter has been secured, response personnel shall attempt to establish whether a robbery is in progress. In order to do so they will:
  - 1. Notify Rabun County Central Communications Center to make telephone contact with an employee in the facility with the appropriate code word. This action is only possible with a business or bank that has set up this procedure;
  - 2. Attempt to determine whether business appears to be taking place in a normal manner with patrons entering and exiting; if visible, whether inside employees and customers are acting normally; or
  - 3. Does business appear to have stopped with the blinds/curtains drawn, lights turned off, or a "closed" sign placed on the window.
- I. If contact is made with employees within the facility and there does not appear to be a robbery in progress:
  - 1. The deputy(s) shall determine from which exit the contact employee shall leave the building and designate one officer to have the exiting employee approach following receipt of his/her identity and description from the dispatcher;
  - 2. **Caution must be used for perpetrators who may attempt to impersonate employees;**
  - 3. Once verification has been made of the employee's status the deputy shall accompany the employee into the establishment in order to confirm the situation; and

4. Following the inspection, the deputy shall report his/her findings to the other response personnel, and return to service.
- J. If a robbery in progress is suspected or confirmed, no attempt shall be made to enter the building unless otherwise directed to do so.
1. The dispatcher will be notified and instructed to initiate "10-3" (stop transmitting) and "10-33" (Emergency) procedure.
  2. All attempts to apprehend the suspect(s) shall be made outside the facility.
  3. Based upon the circumstances, deputies shall approach the matter as a barricaded suspect/hostage situation.
  4. Individuals who exit the building should be engaged and ordered to positions where they can be disarmed, searched, and if a suspect, placed into custody. If possible, exiting individuals will be engaged at some distance from doorways so as not to risk their re-entry into the building.
- K. Deputies must be aware of the ballistic background in their field of fire and the potential for injury to innocent bystanders should gunfire be initiated.
- L. Once an apprehension is made and the area is stabilized, the crime scene shall be secured for processing by Criminal Investigations Division personnel and and/or federal authorities.
- M. If the perpetrators have left the scene:
1. The first responding unit shall remain at the facility to secure the crime scene and to obtain appropriate information concerning the perpetrators and their direction and mode of escape for immediate transition to other response units. In addition, witnesses shall be identified and any injured parties cared for; and
  2. All other responding units shall initiate a search for the suspects on likely escape routes.
- N. If the alarm is received during non-business hours, responding personnel will:
1. Establish a perimeter around the building;
  2. Inspect the exterior of the facility for signs of forced entry;
  3. If signs of forced entry exist, officers shall remain at their perimeter positions until a suitable number of responding officers are on scene and then perform the search; and
  4. If there are no signs of forced entry, the dispatcher shall be notified and may be requested to contact the alarm company to have a key holder meet the deputies at the location in order for the premises to be checked and the alarm reset. Rabun County Central Communications only contacts key holders that are listed on alarm panels; all others are the responsibility of the alarm company that monitors those alarm systems.
- O. Criminal Investigation Division (CID) and Other Plain-Clothes Response Procedures

1. Any unmarked unit that is in close proximity to the alarm site will exercise a Code 1 response to the facility.
2. All other in-service CID and unmarked units shall monitor the situation and be prepared to respond toward the alarm scene in order to render appropriate assistance to the uniformed patrol personnel.
3. Once at the alarm location, plainclothes personnel must initially assume positions around the perimeter of the facility and await the arrival of additional uniformed personnel.
4. Plainclothes personnel will immediately make visible their badge and agency identification and, if available, wear marked items of agency clothing, such as a raincoat, traffic vest, or jacket.
5. Plainclothes personnel will not attempt to enter the building.
6. If it is confirmed that an actual robbery occurred, CID personnel should assume investigative responsibility and make other appropriate notifications to federal authorities as needed.

## **II. RESIDENTIAL ALARM RESPONSE PROCEDURES**

- A. One marked patrol unit will be dispatched and will do an outside check of the premises.
- B. If notification is received by telephone, the dispatcher will follow same procedures as prescribed for a business/bank/financial institution alarm situation.
- C. If notification is received from an alarm company, attempt to obtain name of key-holder and relay all information to responding unit(s).
- D. If notified alarm is false, follow same procedures as prescribed for business/bank/financial institution. A deputy may cancel their response only if the alarm company clears the alarm through the dispatch center.
- E. For both silent and audible alarm situations officers will determine whether there are any signs of forced entry into the residence by checking all doors and windows.
- F. If the residence is secure and there are no signs of forced entry, notify the dispatcher, and return to service.
- G. If the residence is not secure or there are signs of forced entry, it is preferred that the on scene deputy wait for a back-up officer before entering if possible.
- H. If key-holder is not available, request that she/he be notified and that they report to residence to verify situation.
- I. Notify Criminal Investigations Division personnel when appropriate.

## **III. BURGLAR IN RESIDENCE SITUATIONS**

- A. The primary and back-up units should attempt to make a simultaneous arrival at the scene if possible.

- B. Initial response units will be observant of any individuals outside or near the incident scene who may be serving as lookouts, cover, or drivers for the burglary. Deputies should initially position themselves to cover/observe exterior doors, to listen for any signs of interior activity, and to identify any indications of forced entry.
- C. If a burglary in progress is suspected or confirmed, no attempt shall be made to enter the residence until back-up personnel are on the scene. Unless it is apparent that a victim(s) is within the residence and requires immediate assistance, attempts to apprehend the suspect(s) shall be made outside the residence.
- D. If informed that the alarm is a false alarm by individuals on the scene, officers should request entry into the residence to verify the situation.

#### **IV. PRE-PLANNING RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. The Sheriff's Office shall conduct necessary prior planning for robberies at banks, convenience and liquor stores, and other likely businesses within the county by accomplishing the following tasks:
  - 1. Identify all banks, financial institutions, and other businesses that are at risk for robbery;
  - 2. Examine each location both externally and internally;
  - 3. Designate external defensive locations that offer appropriate observation of all building exits and adequate protection for response personnel;
  - 4. Become familiar with approaches to the location that are not readily visible from inside the establishment;
  - 5. Identify the most logical avenues of escape;
  - 6. Meet with the owner and key employees, become familiar with the interior of the location, and examine the view and visibility from all exits and windows of the business in relation to the designated positions for response personnel;
  - 7. Explain to supervisory personnel the Sheriff's Office alarm response procedures and the actions employees should take;
  - 8. Employees should be informed that officers will not normally enter the establishment if a robbery is in progress or suspected.
  - 9. Employees should be advised to close and lock the exits after a robbery in order to prevent the return of the suspects upon being confronted with response personnel; and
  - 10. Employees should also be cautioned to protect any evidence at the crime scene.

- B. All personnel should rehearse mentally their best approach based upon different times of the day and potential pedestrian and vehicle traffic.



By Order of the Sheriff: **Chad K. Nichols**  
**Sheriff, Rabun County**