

**Title: Response to Buildings with  
Automatic Fire Alarm Systems**

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**Purpose:** To establish a procedure for Fire/Rescue personnel to follow when responding to buildings with Automatic Fire Alarms Systems.

**Scope:** This procedure is to be followed by all Fire/Rescue employees. Authority to deviate from this procedure rests with the Battalion Chief, Shift Commander or their designee, who is solely responsible for the results of any deviation.

**General:** When responding to any property equipped with an automatic fire alarm, or manually operated alarm system the following procedures are to be followed:

**210.06.01. Operational Guidelines for Automatic Fire Alarm Responses:**

- First arriving unit, locate proper building or buildings, or any part of the building involved by the annunciator panel and inform the other arriving units of the status of the system.
- Search building or buildings, perform rescue and evacuation, control fire or, if there is no apparent problem, try to determine why the system activated.
- After completion of the above, the alarm system should be placed back in operation by the building maintenance personnel. Fire crews should not become concerned with the placing back into service any fire alarm system.
- Do not call the maintenance company that is responsible for maintaining the system unless directed by the owner or as a last resort.
- Notify the owner, manager or other personnel acting in the above capacity of the actions taken by the fire department, what was found and whether the system is in operating condition, or what part of the system is not operating.

- Get the name of the owner, manager or other personnel you notified of the system's condition. Include this information in the fire report.
- Do not, for any reason, make any derogatory remarks of inadequacy of the alarm system, or the maintenance of the organization. All alarm systems are inspected for Code compliance.
- Any time an alarm system is left out-of-service, or part of the system needs maintenance, the responsible Company Officer is responsible for notifying the Office of the Fire Marshal. They, in turn, will follow through with the owners or monitoring agency of the property.
- Alarm systems are mandated by Code in many occupancies and should not be taken out-of-service by Fire Department personnel. As an absolute last resort, a system should only be taken out-of-service by the owner or an authorized representative of the owner. If this is done, include the owners name and address in the fire report. The Office of the Fire Marshal should be notified as soon as possible of any problems with any alarm system.
- Before a system is considered re-set, "Winter Park" should be contacted to see if the system has been returned to the normal status. A call to the monitoring agency is usually needed.
- The alarm company shall always be referred to as the "monitoring agency" so as not to draw attention to one particular agency that may be experiencing a problem.
- A reported Automatic Fire Alarm will require the response of TWO ENGINE COMPANIES, ONE TRUCK COMPANY, and ONE BATTALION CHIEF.
- During times when multiple calls are being answered,(i.e. during Storm Status) the Battalion Chief may alter response assignments to reports of activated automatic fire alarms. A minimum of ONE fire-rescue unit must respond to all reported Automatic Fire Alarms, no matter the conditions.
- In situations when easy access is not available to the structure, fire personnel should use any and all means necessary to determine if a fire actually exist within the building. This would include utilization of KEY BOX access keys, raising ladders to upper floors, viewing through windows etc.
- Crews should be on the scene for a minimum of 20 minutes before considering the alarm false and leaving. Conditions while operating

under Storm Status may dictate a need to leave the scene prior to the 20 minutes.

- If the officer in-charge is satisfied that no fire exists within the structure without gaining full access to the building, the scene may be released and the alarm regarded as false.
- If on the other hand, it cannot be determined from an exterior examination of the building that a problem exists, the officer in charge should decide if forced access is required. If forced access is required, care should be taken to reduce the amount of damage.
- A building representative should be contacted to respond to the scene to assist with gaining access. If no one is available and the IC is not satisfied that the building is safe, forced entry will be required.
- If the decision is made to make forced entry to a property, the IC shall contact “Winter Park” and request the assistance of the Police Department.
- All means available should be used to determine the nature of the alarm and its validity before the release of the scene by the IC.