

**Travis County Emergency Services District No. 9**  
**Westlake Fire Department**

**Standard Operating Procedure**

**Subject: Response to Alarm Activations**

**Effective Date: December 27, 2000**

**Authorized By: Chief Paul Barker Date: October 25, 2000**

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**I. Purpose**

To establish a policy and procedure for response to alarm activations.

**II. Policy**

- A. The WFD shall respond to Fire Alarm Signals and Supervisory Signals and remain on the scene until there is a determination of the cause of the activation at any residential or commercial occupancy.
- B. Responses to alarm activations will normally be Code 1, unless upgraded to Code 3 by Dispatch or the Company Officer.
- C. The WFD will not respond to "Trouble" Fire Alarm Signals or to Security Alarm Signals.

**III. Procedure**

- A. There will be a Code 1, single engine response to automatic alarm activations unless Dispatch or the Company Officer receives other information or has reason to believe that a greater response is required. An example of this would be multiple calls for the same address from other sources.
- B. In addition to the type of alarm, zone, etc., Dispatch will attempt to determine the ETA of a key holder and will advise the responding Company Officer of this information.
- C. Dispatch may cancel an alarm if they can confirm that the alarm is due to only a system malfunction, or if they can confirm from the monitoring company and the owner / resident or key holder that it is a false alarm. In all cases, Dispatch shall inform the responding engine company of any pertinent information received.
- D. Upon arrival at an alarm activation where there is no apparent fire / smoke showing and no one is on the premises to allow access, the engine company should attempt to make a visual inspection of the interior of the building through the windows or by entering the structure through an unsecured door or window.
- E. If a visual inspection of the entire interior is not possible from the outside (as with multistory occupancies or a large warehouse), every effort should be made to gain entry short of causing major damage.

- F. If entry can not be made without causing major damage to the building and there are no apparent signs of fire or water flow (smoke, fire, audible alarm, etc.), the engine company shall stand-by for up to 30-minutes until a key holder arrives to gain access.
- G. In the event of an audible alarm is sounding but entry can't be made without causing major damage and the Company Officer suspects there could be hidden fire or there is evidence of interior water, the Company Officer shall use his / her discretion as whether to force entry or not or to merely continue to stand-by. Consideration should be given to the ETA of the key holder and to balancing the damage of entry with the damage hidden water or fire could do.
- H. The engine company may clear the scene at the Company Officer's discretion after having been in a stand-by mode for at least 30-minutes without apparent signs of fire or water flow other than the audible alarm, if Dispatch has not been able to confirm the ETA of the owner / occupant or key holder. If the key holder has been notified and is en-route to the scene, the engine company shall continue to stand-by for an additional 15-minutes (available on scene) until he / she arrives to allow access.
- I. Dispatch will forward any intrusion or burglar alarms to the appropriate police agency (WLHPD, RWPD, TCSO, APD) prior to or after WFD response and notify the responding Company Officer of the alarm activation. The Company Officer will decide whether or not to stage for responding police.