



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

General Order Number: 12-06	Effective Date: January 2010
Division: Inspections and Investigations	
Chapter: Needless Fire Alarm Activations	
By Order of the Fire Chief: Marc S. Bashoor	Revision Date: N/A

POLICY

This General Order shall establish procedures to be followed when handling any needless fire alarm system activations. This order is intended to aid property management in the implementation of steps to provide a fire watch/guard service which will adequately protect a property against fire loss while its protective systems are rendered inoperable.

Due to an increase in the number and frequency of faulty, false and mischievous fire alarm activations being handled by fire suppression forces, the following procedures are hereby established for all Fire/Rescue Operations personnel.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions, in reference to fire alarm activations, are provided:

Local Fire Alarm System - When activated, these systems sound the building evacuation alarm bells and/or strobe lights, however, these systems are not monitored by an alarm company. Local Fire Alarm Systems are activated by manual pull stations, smoke or heat detectors, suppression systems, and water flow devices.

Monitored Fire Alarm System - When activated, these systems will operate all building evacuation devices (bells, strobes, voice messages, etc.) and send a signal to the alarm monitoring company. The alarm monitoring company, in turn, notifies Public Safety Communications (PSC). Monitored Fire Alarm Systems are activated by manual pull stations, smoke or heat detectors, suppression systems, and water flow devices.

Malfunctioning Fire Alarm System - When the fire alarm system falsely activates as a result of defective or poorly maintained devices or circuits; it shall be considered a system malfunction.

Malfunctioning Alarm Device - A specific device(s) within the fire alarm system malfunctions, e.g., smoke alarm, pressure switch, water flow device, pull station, etc.

Trouble Signal - A trouble signal indicates some type of circuit problem/trouble within the fire alarm system. This signal should not activate the fire alarm system and is designed to notify the owner and/or maintenance personnel that a problem exists. This trouble will be a necessary repair which they shall request to be made by their fire alarm service contractor.



PROCEDURES / RESPONSIBILITIES

1. General Provisions

When responding to fire alarm system activations where no emergency operations are necessary, the officer-in-charge (OIC) of the first arriving or first due company shall investigate and attempt to determine what caused the fire alarm system to activate.

The purpose of this investigation is to identify the specific cause of the fire alarm activation, e.g., water flow device, water surge, power surge, smoke detector, duct detector, etc.

The OIC shall request that a representative of the building, tenant space, store owner, shop owner, alarm company, technician, or contractor be present on the scene to restore the activated system to an operational ready condition.

If the specific cause of the fire alarm system activation is found, a Needles Fire Alarm Activation Correction Order is to be issued to the on-scene representative, building supervisor/manager, etc. (owner/occupant details are also contained in the battalion pre-fire plan files).

- Complete the top of the correction order completely, utilizing the incident number as the form control number.
- Indicate appropriate violation(s) listed on the correction order.
- Circle the first, second, or third notice, whichever is appropriate for this particular address. If the specific number of notice is unknown, circle first.
- Have the owner and/or building representative (tenant, shop owner, alarm/ sprinkler technician) review the reverse side and sign the correction order.
- Correction Order copy distribution:
 - Pink copy to building representative that signed/received the correction order.
 - Yellow copy to first due station file.
 - White copy to be forwarded the next day to the Fire Inspections/Code Enforcement/Special Hazards office.

If the cause of the needless fire alarm system activation cannot be determined or if any specific problems arise, request the on-duty Special Hazards inspector or the area Fire Inspector to assist on the scene.

Advise the responsible building representative (the person who signs the correction order) to place the fire alarm system back in service as soon as possible. A fire watch is to be initiated whenever appropriate (if the building is to continue to be occupied).

The following guidelines should be followed in abating repeated needless fire alarm system activations at the same site:

- First Activation – Issue “First Notice” Correction Order.
- Second Activation – Issue “Second Notice” Correction Order.



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- Third Activation – Issue “Third and Final Notice” Correction Order and notify the area Special Hazards inspector, supervisor, or closest available Fire Inspector.
- Continued activations after “Third Notice” – Issue a correction order and request a fire inspector address the problem. Civil citations are generally issued after the “Third Notice,” in accordance with the provisions of General Order 12-01.

REFERENCES

N/A

FORMS / ATTACHMENTS

N/A