



## MYRTLE BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

### ADMINISTRATION REGULATIONS AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

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**Subject:** *Abandoned 911 Calls and Private Alarms*

**Number:** 509

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**Effective Date:** *September 27, 2024*

**Revised Date:**

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**Rescinds:**

**Dated:**

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Approved By:

#### I. PURPOSE

To provide guidelines for responding to abandoned 911 calls or received security alarms. This directive includes procedures for enforcement of current laws and ordinances relating to false alarms.

#### II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Myrtle Beach Police Department to respond to all abandoned 911 calls and security alarm signals at businesses, government owned properties, private residences, and other locations in order to protect persons and property, deter crime, and apprehend perpetrators.

#### III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Abandoned 911 Call – A call received on an emergency phone line that fails to establish a line of communication with the caller. These calls would include hang-ups, open lines, and calls that are disconnected before a request for assistance can be made.
- B. Nuisance Liaison Officer – An officer designated by the Chief of Police to enforce the provisions of City of Myrtle Beach Ordinances pertaining to nuisances involving false alarms.
- C. Responsible Party – An owner, manager, key-holder, legal occupant, or other person responsible for a particular residence, business, building, or location.

## **IV. PROCEDURE**

### **A. ABANDONED 911 CALLS**

1. To ensure citizen safety, police officers shall be dispatched to the location of all abandoned 911 calls, even if no emergency is indicated.
2. A minimum of two officers shall be dispatched to calls involving open lines, when possible. A minimum of one officer shall be dispatched to hang-ups or disconnects.
3. If the dispatcher eventually establishes contact with a caller and they state there is no emergency, an officer response may be canceled if the caller expresses a reasonable excuse for why the call was placed in error (i.e. child had phone, misdialed, technology error, etc.). If there are any indicators of a need for assistance, one officer will continue to the scene to verify a person's safety.
4. The first officer on the scene may cancel assisting units after contact is made with the caller and no emergency appears to exist.
5. If the dispatcher cannot make contact, officer(s) will make every effort to reasonably assure the safety and well-being of persons within the residence, business or other location. Steps to be taken when investigating this type of event may include:
  - i. Attempt to contact the complaint using a city cell phone or ask dispatch to make a call-back;
  - ii. Knock on doors, observing and listening for activity inside the structure, checking for any unlocked doors or windows;
  - iii. Check with neighbors or nearby businesses to determine the identity of residents/occupants and any known medical history or previous law enforcement service needs;
  - iv. Check CAD to determine any prior responses to the location;
  - v. Conduct a registration check on any vehicle on the premises to determine the identity of its owner;
  - vi. Search the Driver and Vehicle Information Database for owner information, and;
  - vii. Access other on-line records to identify the owner and find contact information.

## B. PRIVATE ALARM RESPONSE

1. All alarms shall require an immediate police or fire dispatch response. Alarm notifications received from private monitoring systems shall be dispatched following the same procedures as alarms received in the Communications Center.
2. Two units shall be dispatched, when possible, to investigate the source of the alarm.
3. An officer response may be canceled if a private monitoring company advises the proper code has been given. EXCEPTION: A response is required and may not be canceled for an alarm from a bank.
4. Once on a scene of any alarm, the officer shall make an initial assessment of the situation and advise dispatch personnel. The dispatcher shall attempt to contact the responsible person with a request to respond to the scene.
5. The exterior of the building shall be checked for signs of intrusion and areas of unsecured access.
6. A protective sweep of the interior shall be completed if it is accessible.
7. If the building is found to be unsecured, the primary officer will attempt to notify a responsible party to secure the premises. If a responsible party is not available, the officer will secure the building as much as possible and place a keep check on the property. The officer will enter the details into the CAD notes, which shall then be forwarded to the day shift Watch Commander for follow up.
8. Unless the cause of the alarm is known, an attempt shall be made to determine the cause. The Responsible Party should be advised to have the alarm checked by their alarm company if the cause is unknown or if line trouble is indicated. Specific information is required for the officers report or CAD entry, including; cause of the alarm, person responsible for alarm activation (if applicable), name of person contacted at the scene, action recommended to resolve false activation problems, company servicing alarm, status of the alarm upon police clearing the scene, etc.

9. Calls for service involving false/unknown cause alarms shall be coded as "FA" - False Alarms and applicable information shall be recorded in CAD notes.
10. In cases when alarm activations are caused by criminal activity, the code should be changed to "IR" – Incident Report, and a crime report specific to the offense shall be generated.

#### C. NUISANCE ALARM ENFORCEMENT

1. The Nuisance Liaison Officer shall run a monthly report showing all false alarms that required a police response.
2. A certified letter shall be sent to any property owner whose property appears on the monthly report for five or more false alarms.
3. A warning ticket shall be issued to any property owner whose property appears on the monthly report for five or more false alarms on two consecutive months.
4. A citation shall be issued to any property owner whose property appears on the monthly report for five or more false alarms on three consecutive months.