



National Emergency Communications Working Group – Australia
and New Zealand (NECWG-A/NZ)

National Alarm Response Sub-Group

“Partnerships in Policing”

NATIONAL POLICE ALARM ACTIVATION RESPONSE GUIDELINES

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1. INTRODUCTION

An analysis was conducted in line with the National Emergency Communications Working Group – Australia and New Zealand (NECWG-A/NZ) standing agenda item to introduce a consistent policy for the way in which Australia policing jurisdictions respond to alarm activations.

A comparative analysis was conducted of the information provided by each agency response. Based on this review, processes and policies that had the majority of alignment between agencies offered the greater potential for consistency.

The monitoring of alarms by private security service providers is no longer restricted to State, Territory or even national boundaries.

Organisations are increasingly selling security systems and indicating certain response behaviours by police. The installation of alarms and the definition of activations are standardised. In many jurisdictions, police have limited or no involvement in how alarms systems are promoted, including how they are responded to when activated, but are responding to increasing alarm activations, the majority of which are non-genuine activations. Equally difficult for Alarm Monitoring Providers (AMPs) is the variation in response provided by each jurisdiction to alarm activations.

Whilst jurisdictions have had localised engagement with alarm monitoring groups and regulatory bodies, to address the need for a consistent approach, formal consultation between NECWG-A/NZ and the Australian Security Industry Association Limited (ASIAL) occurred to address this consistency through an agreed national guideline.

This national guideline is designed to align police classification; requirements; and response to alarms and alarm activations. The guideline is deemed a baseline principle, allowing for individual States and Territories to include specific requirements above and beyond the national guideline, protecting the integrity of jurisdictional policies.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide a framework for:

1. National consistency in the way in which Australian policing jurisdictions and registered security companies define and respond to alarm activations.
2. Processes and procedures for the handling of alarm responses.
3. Efficient use of police resources.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

The National Police Alarm Response Guideline for police response to requests for attendance to alarm activations.

4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the National Police Alarm Response Guideline are to:

- Provide a consistent categorisation of alarm types
- Provide a consistent alarm activation response priority
- Identify those alarm types police may not respond to
- Reduce the number of non-genuine alarm activations that police respond to
- Define AMPs requirements for confirmation of genuine alarm activations.

5. ALARM CATEGORIES AND RESPONSES

Alarm Categories and the associated Police Responses are described in the following table.

Alarm Category	Alarm Type	Definition	Police Response	Alarm Description / Comment
A	Hold Up Alarm – Commercial only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installed in commercial premises. Purpose designed/ manufactured dual action devices, permanently affixed. Operated by a person who is, or is about to be, or has been confronted by a weapon or threat of violence for the purpose of robbery. Maintained to Australian Standards. Monitored by an approved AMP. <p>Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided that the employees in the alarm monitoring centre have no reason to believe that the alarm may have been triggered by accident or by a malfunction. Portable wireless devices, including pendants can only be reported as 'Duress Alarms'. They are not defined as 'Hold Up Alarms'. 	Police attendance prioritised as "High Priority" and guided by the Australian Policing Alarm Activation Response Protocols within this document.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a signal generated from an approved dual action device, permanently affixed to a solid surface (temporary fixtures, such as Velcro or double-sided tape, do not constitute a permanent fixture) installed to industry standards. All devices capable of generating a hold up alarm must be programmed to a separate, individual alarm zone on the alarm control panel. Written procedures for the activation and reset of the device must be supplied and kept on the premises where the device is installed. Any tools or keys that are required for the reset procedure must be kept in a designated location, which is identified in the procedures. It will be mandatory for all premises requiring this service to send open and close events to the monitoring centre when the alarm system is armed and disarmed.

Alarm Category	Alarm Type	Definition	Police Response	Alarm Description / Comment
A (cont'd)	High Risk Premises Alarm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installed in any premises classed as high risk. Maintained to Australian Standards Monitored by an approved AMP. Activated by an apparent intruder on the premises. Key holder for the premises is available to enable police access within a reasonable time. <p>Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided that the employees in the alarm monitoring centre have no reason to believe that the alarm may have been triggered by accident or by a malfunction. <p>Examples of high risk premises, agreed through consultation with police include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Armoured Vehicles. Politician, Judges, Magistrates or other offices of public persons, at risk including Reserve Bank Governor (as agreed). Firearms dealers. Premises where goods are stored that constitutes a risk to the public (as agreed). Designated critical infrastructure (as agreed). 	Police attendance prioritised as “ High Priority ” and guided by the Australian Policing Alarm Activation Response Protocols within this document.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a signal generated from an approved device installed to industry standards. All devices capable of generating a premises alarm must be programmed to a separate, individual alarm zone on the alarm control panel. Written procedures for the activation and reset of the device must be supplied and kept on the premises where the device is installed. Any tools or keys that are required for the reset procedure must be kept in a designated location, which is identified in the procedures. It will be mandatory for all premises requiring this service to send open and close events to the monitoring centre when the alarm system is armed and disarmed.

Alarm Category	Alarm Type	Definition	Police Response	Alarm Description / Comment
A (cont'd)	Monitored Personal Safety Alarm (MPSA)	<p>Issued to:</p> <p>Lone workers in potential risk situations (visiting nurses, mental health etc)</p> <p>High risk VIPs (MPs, judiciary or identified state/national persons)</p> <p>Persons identified at risk of family violence by state or other preventative organisations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitored by an approved AMP. Deliberate activation of a duress signal, and/or Unexplained failure to respond to agreed monitoring protocols <p>Note that the device may fail to activate due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Device failure or loss of contact due to use in a location with no telecommunications network coverage. Failure to properly maintain the MPSA device (flat battery). User initiated failures are not considered an alarm activation 	Police attendance prioritised as “ High Priority ” and guided by the Australian Policing Alarm Activation Response Protocols within this document.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AMP must have direct access to sufficient information about the MPSA user, expected business activity and the employer/supervisor/MPSA user's contact details. On activation the AMP must validate the MPSA by attempting to contact the user. If unable to contact the MPSA user, contact to be made with user's supervisor or employer for direction. On validation, the AMP will call for police response and include the current indicated location including Lat/Long of the MPSA device and last confirmed location of the MPSA and user. On validation the AMP must continue tracking the location of the MPSA at regular intervals (minimum polling 60 seconds) and report any changes in location to police. <p><i>MPSA User Responsibilities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be aware of the network coverage in the MPSA user's area of operation. Ensure the device is properly maintained (charged battery) Be fully conversant with the correct use of the MPSA, including all monitoring protocols and requirements to update the AMP and only activate when the user is under assault, threat or duress.

Alarm Category	Alarm Type	Definition	Police Response	Alarm Description / Comment
B	Multi-Sector / Multi-Break Alarm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installed at any premises. Maintained to Australian Standards. Monitored by an approved AMP. Two or more sectors activated or more than one break on the same sector activated by an apparent intruder. Keys to the premises are available to enable police access within a reasonable time (deemed 30 minutes). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If not, the call must only be made after an on-site inspection is carried out and access to the premises can be facilitated for attending police. <p>Note: But only after the employees in the alarm monitoring centre have contacted the client or a neighbour, or monitored any available CCTV link to ensure that the alarm has not been triggered by accident or by a malfunction.</p>	Police attendance prioritised as “ High Priority ”, where following the activation of the alarm, there is some other evidence of attendant circumstances indicating an increased urgency of attendance is required, e.g. confirmed intruders on the premises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a signal generated from an approved device installed to industry standards. All devices capable of generating a multi-sector alarm must be programmed to a separate, individual alarm zone on the alarm control panel. The alarm must be generated as a result multiple individually alarmed sectors be activated. It will be mandatory for all premises requiring this service to send open and close events to the monitoring centre when the alarm system is armed and disarmed.
	Communication Failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An alarm installed at any premises and maintained to Australian Standards. Monitored by an approved AMP. Indicates a communication failure between the alarm and the AMP. <p>Note: The AMP has also confirmed that there are no general communication faults in the area.</p>	Police attendance prioritised as “ High Priority ”, where following the activation of the alarm, there is some other evidence of attendant circumstances indicating an increased urgency of attendance is required, e.g. confirmed intruders on the premises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a signal generated from an approved device installed to industry standards. It will be mandatory for all premises requiring this service to send open and close events to the monitoring centre when the alarm system is armed and disarmed.

Alarm Category	Alarm Type	Definition	Police Response	Alarm Description / Comment
B (cont'd)	Single Sector Alarms at High Risk Premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single sector alarms for both Commercial and Residential As for Category A High Risk Premises Alarms. 	Police attendance prioritised as “ High Priority ”, where following the activation of the alarm, there is some other evidence of attendant circumstances indicating an increased urgency of attendance is required, e.g. confirmed intruders on the premises.	
B (cont'd)	Duress	<p>An alarm installed at any premises and maintained to Australian Standards.</p> <p>Monitored by an approved AMP. Activated by an occupant of the premises as a result of actual physical threat.</p> <p>AMP must be able to identify the precise location of the alarm activation point within the premises.</p> <p>The AMP must have direct access to sufficient information about the premises, expected business activity and contact details.</p>	<p>Police attendance prioritised as “routine”, or</p> <p>Police attendance prioritised as “High Priority”, where following the activation of the alarm, there is some other evidence of attendant circumstances indicating an increased urgency of attendance is required, e.g. confirmed intruders on the premises.</p>	<p>This is a signal generated from an approved dedicated device, permanently affixed to a solid surface (temporary fixtures, such as Velcro or double-sided tape, do not constitute a permanent fixture) installed to industry standards.</p> <p>Must be activated by a real person.</p> <p>Key pad miskeys on entry/exit do not constitute a Duress Alarm.</p>
B (cont'd)	Vehicle Tracking Alarms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where the vehicle is known to be stolen and the vehicle is being tracked by an approved AMP. 	Police attendance prioritised as “ High Priority ”, where following the activation of the alarm, there is some other evidence of attendant circumstances indicating an increased urgency of attendance is required.	

Alarm Category	Alarm Type	Definition	Police Response	Alarm Description / Comment
C	Any alarm other than those listed above e.g. portable wireless devices, including pendants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where the AMP advises that the premises/ person has come under recent threat. 	<p>Police will only attend where the AMP has confirmed that a premises/ person has come under recent threat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the case of an <i>Unmonitored Alarm</i>, an offence has been confirmed or information is received that offenders are on the premises. In the case of a <i>Request for Assistance Alarm</i>, such as a pendant, information is received that the alarm activation is the result of an offence being confirmed or information is received that offenders are on the premises. 	<p><i>Request for Assistance:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a signal that can be generated either from an approved device or a code pad event. The response from the AMP receiving this signal will be to contact the site to determine the type of assistance required. If no contact is available at the site, the nominated after hour's attendant will be contacted and advised of the request for assistance alarm. If confirmation of the reason and type of assistance required cannot be confirmed, or no contact is made with either the site or the person on the contact list, the event will be classified as unresolved. Unresolved events will not be passed onto police for further action.
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple Sector Alarms, where there is no ready access to the premises. Single Sector Alarms – Non High Risk Premises Flashing Blue Lights Unmonitored Alarms Vehicle Alarms Fire or Smoke Sensor alarms Medical Alarms Power Failure/Low Battery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installed in domestic premises Maintained to Australian Standards. Monitored by an approved AMP. The AMP has contacted the premises and the occupier has specifically requested police attendance. The AMP has telephoned the premises and phone has rung out with no answer. There are other attendant circumstances that dictate a police response is required. 	<p>Police will not respond unless the AMP has ascertained by either site inspection or independent verification that a crime is being, or has been, committed.</p>	<p><i>Multiple Sector Alarm example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The premises are on the 15th floor of a secured building and the keys cannot be made available to attending police within 30 minutes.

Table 1: Alarm Categories

6. ACCREDITED MONITORING

Police will respond to requests for assistance from accredited AMPs. For the purpose of these Guidelines, an accredited AMP is defined as:

- (i) It is a current member of an recognised security industry organisation, and
- (ii) It complies with Australian Standard 2201.2 (as revised from time to time) monitoring centre certification, and
- (iii) The telephone link in its alarm monitoring centre is capable of showing Caller Line Identification (CLI) to the relevant police jurisdiction's telephone links.

7. REVISION OF POLICE RESPONSES

Police responses to the various alarm categories and alarm types are included in section 5.

However, in the event of ongoing unwarranted Category A and B alarm activations from monitored sites, the following policies and treatments are provided as a guide.

Policy	Description	Treatment
Three (3) Strikes policy	Applies when police resources have been assigned to 3 unwarranted alarm activations from a monitored site within 3 calendar months.	Advice to the AMP that Police response to that site will be downgraded to a Request for Assistance (refer Category C in section 5), until police are advised that appropriate remedial action has been undertaken.
Two (2) Strikes Hold Up policy	Applies when police resources have been assigned to 2 unwarranted Hold Up alarm activations from a monitored site within 12 calendar months.	As above.
Suspension of Police Response	Applies when there have been 2 Advices (under the above policies) for a monitored site within 12 calendar months.	Advice to the AMP that Police response to that site will be downgraded to a Request for Assistance (refer Category C in section 5), until police have satisfied themselves that appropriate remedial action has been completed.

Table 2: Revised Police Responses

Note that templates for the advices/ letters sent to AMPs under the above policies are not included in this document, but are available from the Police subcommittee of NECWG-A/NZ, if required.

8. GUIDELINE REVIEW

A group of industry representatives and police will meet annually to discuss the Alarm Categories and Guidelines; and to identify emerging issues and create nationally aligned strategies to reduce the number of requests for police to attend false/unwarranted alarms.

The Police subcommittee of NECWG-A/NZ will review the implementation of the Guideline annually.