

PALM BEACH GARDENS POLICE DEPARTMENT

BANK ALARM RESPONSES

POLICY AND PROCEDURE 4.2.1.10

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PURPOSE: To establish guidelines for ensuring that bank alarm responses and investigations are conducted in a safe, organized and thorough manner.

SCOPE: This policy and procedure applies to all sworn officers responding to a bank alarm.

REVIEW RESPONSIBILITY: Operations Bureau Supervisors

POLICY: Bank alarm notification to law enforcement agencies should be authenticated as to whether the alarm is an accidental trip or malfunction or an actual robbery "in progress" or robbery "just occurred". Bank alarms present officers with extreme hazards which are not readily apparent. Therefore, it is becoming increasingly important that banks/banking institutions work carefully to minimize loss of time in authenticating bank robberies or the chance of hostage situations or injuries, while enhancing the probability of apprehension.

1. PROCEDURE

- a. It shall be the policy of the Palm Beach Gardens Police Department to respond to all bank alarms occurring in the City of Palm Beach Gardens upon notification from dispatch operations.
- b. Upon receiving activated alarm information from a bank alarm monitoring company, communications shall dispatch the closest available patrol units and notify the appropriate field supervisor.
- c. The primary responding unit shall be responsible for assignment of positions to backup units. An example would be assigning units to the NE and SW corner, so that all sides of the building would be covered effectively with a minimum amount of manpower.
- d. Communications shall call the bank after responding patrol units have arrived on scene and have assumed tactical position(s). The bank and bank alarm monitoring company have a predetermined code between themselves which will advise the status of the situation.
 - i. Actual robbery "in progress" -If the coded response indicates a robbery in progress, communications shall immediately inform the responding units.
 - ii. Actual robbery "just occurred" -If the coded response indicates robbery just occurred, then communications shall notify the following:
 1. All zones via radio.
 2. Emergency medical services, if requested.
 3. The criminal investigations division.
 4. The shift commander.
 5. Other police agencies, if necessary.

- iii. False or accidental alarm -If the coded response indicates a false or accidental alarm, communications shall notify the responding units, but shall not cancel the assignments.
 - 1. If the telephone call to the bank is unanswered or the phone removed from the cradle and there is no response, communications shall handle the alarm as a robbery "in progress" until otherwise directed.
 - 2. If the robbery is reported via telephone, communications shall keep the caller on the line and obtain all appropriate information.
 - 3. Communications shall broadcast available information to responding units via radio.
 - 4. When the first responding unit arrives at the scene, communications shall place the station on "emergency traffic only" status, until the status is rescinded by units at the scene.
 - 5. Communications shall obtain, via telephone, the clothing and physical descriptions of the bank representative who will be meeting them and relay the information to the responding units.
 - 6. Communications shall instruct the designated bank representative to exit the bank from a specific doorway, wearing the issued identification card and meet with the police officers according to instructions.
 - 7. If the alarm is received after business hours, communications shall notify the subscriber or representative to respond to the scene.

2. RESPONSE BY OFFICERS

- a. Approaching the scene
 - i. The approach objective is to respond with maximum safe speed and minimum detection to avoid alarming persons/suspect(s) inside the bank which may precipitate a hostage situation.
 - ii. Low profile approach -Emergency lights sirens will be canceled within hearing or visual range (1 mile, farther at night) of the bank. Reduce radio volume and limit unnecessary noise, vehicular or otherwise, which would alert the suspect(s) and curious citizens to the officer's arrival.
 - iii. A void making a direct approach to the scene until the last possible minute by using parallel streets. Turning into the street of the robbery at the nearest intersection will maximize the element of surprise if there is a lookout at the scene. In problem locations it would be best to allow the backup unit to get into position and then move in together.
 - iv. Responding officers shall predetermine their arrival positions via voice radio, while enroute to the scene. Normally, the primary unit will cover the front and one side of the bank with the back-up unit covering the rear and remaining side of the building to eliminate cross-fire positioning.
 - v. Extra backup can best serve to patrol side streets which may be used as getaway routes.
 - vi. While enroute, scan the area for suspicious persons or vehicles leaving the area.
 - vii. If information is received that an explosive device is involved in the robbery, it is essential that responding units refrain from any radio transmission with 500 yards of the scene. **DO NOT ENTER THE BANK.**
 - viii. In the event a detective or plain clothed officer(s) responds to the alarm, the officer shall identify himself/herself by radio, giving car and clothing description. The officer shall follow standard operating procedure as outlined in this section.
 - ix. **DO NOT CIRCLE THE BANK PRIOR TO ASSUMING AN ASSIGNED POSITION.** The approach and deployment of officers should go undetected.
- b. Arrival at the scene
 - i. Upon arrival, officers should exit their vehicles and seek positions that afford maximum safe cover and observation. **DO NOT PARK THE PATROL CAR WHERE IT WILL BE VISIBLE FROM THE INTERIOR OF THE BANK. DO NOT ENTER THE BANK.**
 - ii. Responding officers shall maintain their positions and cover, until such time as they are met outside by the designated bank representative and an "all clear" status has been given for the bank. The officer will then accompany the employee into the bank for final inspection.

1. Concealed officers will not reveal their location or expose themselves until they have had a chance to observe the "representative" and determine whether armed or not.
 2. The officer will advise a representative from the bank, via dispatch, to exit the bank to some nearby landmark; a utility pole, a news rack, mailbox, etc.
 3. In no one comes out, officer(s) shall remain in a concealed position and shall not approach the bank.
 4. If a hostage situation arises, call-out procedures for SWAT and other special teams will be initiated.
 5. DO NOT ENTER THE BANK.
- iii. Responding officers receiving information of a "false alarm" while enroute are to proceed in the same manner as for an actual robbery-in-progress and confirm the alarm status after arrival.
 - iv. If the alarm is determined to be false, the responding officer shall initiate a false alarm report to the alarm user. Exceptions to issuing an alarm report are as follows:
 1. An actual robbery or attempt has been committed.
 2. The alarm signal was caused by extraordinary circumstances not reasonably subject to control by the alarm service or the alarm user.
 - v. In responding to bank alarms within shopping malls, the designated bank representative shall be instructed by dispatch to meet with the responding officers at a predetermined location outside the nearest mall exit. Officers shall remain deployed and concealed at mall exit points.
 1. Civilians should not be allowed to enter the mall.
 2. Extra backup should be used to check people exiting the mall.
 - vi. After an actual bank robbery, with the consent of the bank official in charge, the bank will be temporarily closed until the scene has been processed, witnesses interviewed, and the bank surveillance video has been secured.
 - vii. Supervisors and all responding officers shall cause all necessary reports to be completed before the end of their tour of duty regarding bank response where a robbery in progress is valid.

3. GLOSSARY:

Bank/Banking Institution - As used in this procedure, shall include commercial banks, savings and loan associations and credit unions.

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APPROVED:

Stephen J. Stepp
Chief of Police

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