



Alarm Verification and Notification Procedures

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Foreword

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Introduction

This standard defines methods by which false dispatches can be greatly reduced. It has been proven that verifying an alarm signal by a monitoring central station will drastically reduce false dispatches. This standard takes verification to its next level by defining multiple call verification, cross zoning, biometric, audio and video verification.

Methods defined herein have been tested and proven to achieve a lower level of false dispatch. Further reduction is possible to achieve using a combination of the methods defined herein.

Alarm Verification and Notification Procedures

1 Scope

This standard has been prepared under the direction of the Security Industry Standards Council (SISC) members with the participation of Central Station Alarm Association (CSAA) members, Security Industry Association (SIA) members, National Burglar & Fire Alarm Association (NBFAA) members, ASIS members and Canadian Alarm Association (CANASA) members. This standard is to be used by alarm monitoring facilities and by state and local units of government in their development of consistent administration criteria for alarms. New technologies and successful efforts to reduce false alarms have led to this standard. This standard, adopted by the various states and local units of government, recognizes the life saving benefits monitored security and fire alarm systems provide. The intent of this standard is to achieve increased efficiencies by reducing costs and eliminating wasteful efforts associated with potential false alarms.

1.1 General

If differences exist between this standard and other written Special Instructions with the monitored premises, the Special Instructions shall take precedence.

1.2 Definitions

1.2.1

alarm verification

alarm verification is a generic name given to many techniques used (1) to permit authorized personnel to appropriately identify themselves, thereby preventing emergency response agencies from being requested to respond to situations that do not represent an emergency; and (2) to confirm or deny the validity of alarm signals received at a Central Station or monitoring facility.

1.2.2

"UL Certificated" Service

the term "UL Certificated" Service, as used in this document, refers to burglar alarm systems that have a UL certificate in force and therefore follow verification procedures outlined in UL 827, UL 2050, ULC S301 or ULC S304 Standards.

1.2.3

Types of Verification

Two broad forms of verification may be employed. These include:

1.2.3.1

standard verification

standard verification is the attempt by monitoring facility personnel to verify that an emergency does not appear to exist at the monitored premises, by means of a telephone call, voice contact or other electronic means

1.2.3.2

enhanced verification

Enhanced Verification is the attempt by monitoring facility personnel to verify that no emergency appears to exist, at the monitored premises, by means of more thorough procedures such as two (2) or more verification calls, live audio or video, cross zoning, other means or a combination of these procedures.

1.2.3.3

Methods of Verification

1.2.3.3.1

Electronic Verification

An electronic signal transmitted to the monitoring facility that indicates to its personnel or to its dispatch computer that no emergency appears to exist.

1.2.3.3.2

Verbal

A personal contact by means of telephone or audio conversation with an authorized pass code holder or other authorized person for the protected premises to verify that no emergency exists.

1.2.3.3.3

Video

An electronic picture, pictures or images viewing an area of the protected premises from which an alarm signal has been received which permits monitoring facility personnel to view the area which has an alarm to verify an emergency condition exists or alternately that no emergency appears to exist.

1.2.3.3.4

Cross Zoning

The application of redundant detection devices such that one motion detector or one photo-electric beam paired with some other device such as another motion detector, photo-electric beam, door contact or door contacts, to cover generally the same area. An alarm is recognized when both detectors in the pair are triggered.

1.2.3.3.5

Electronic Biometrics

The ability to verify the identity of authorized on premises personnel through the use of detectors that utilize facial or body recognition, voice identification, hand geometry, fingerprint identification or other biometric characteristic identification technology.

1.3

notification call

The call to the law enforcement authority, such as 911 or the telephone number used to reach the responding law enforcement agency.

1.4

dispatch

Notification of law enforcement agency as defined in 1.3. a guard, guards, a runner, runners, other response entities or predetermined combination of the above to respond to the premises.

1.5

special instructions

A written, separate document from the monitoring contract document, that specifies a specific set of instructions to be followed in the event of an alarm, between the monitored premises and the alarm/monitoring company.

2 Standard Verification Procedures for Burglar Alarm Signals

2.1 Procedures for Alarm Signals Received from Systems without “UL Certificated” Service

Unless Special Instructions exist, monitoring facility personnel shall call the protected premises for identification and verification of persons authorized to be on the customer’s premises.

2.1.1 If No Contact

If there is no answer, the monitoring facility personnel shall make a Notification Call, unless the monitoring facility personnel have reason to believe no emergency exists.

2.1.2 If Telephone is Answered

If the telephone is answered, the monitoring facility personnel shall obtain pass code verification or other electronic identification that the person is authorized to be on the premises. Upon receipt of correct identification, and the authorized person states that no emergency exists, responding entities shall not be notified or shall be recalled, if already notified, and the alarm is considered aborted.

2.1.2.1 No Code

If no code or authorization is provided, the monitoring facility personnel shall attempt to reach an authorized person off premises to verify the authenticity of the on premises person, and failing that shall make a Notification Call. Further explanatory material on this can be found in Annex A.

2.1.2.2 Wrong Code

If the person(s) contacted cannot be identified by a valid identification code within a reasonable time after the contact as defined in 2.1.2, the monitoring facility personnel shall make a Notification Call.

2.2 Procedures for Alarm Signals Received from Systems with “UL Certificated” Service

Signals received from certificated systems shall be handled in accordance with the procedures defined in UL Standard 827, UL 2050, ULC S301 or ULC S304.

3 Enhanced Telephone Verification of Burglar Alarm Signals

3.1 Extended Time

The maximum time permitted for enhanced verification of a non-certificated system can be extended beyond the time constraints imposed for certificated systems defined in UL 827, UL 2050, ULC S301 or ULC S304.

3.2 Procedure

For burglary alarm signals received from non-certificated commercial burglary alarm systems or any residential alarm system, the following procedures shall be followed (further explanatory material on this can be found in Annex A):

3.2.1 Call 1

The monitoring facility shall attempt telephone verification to the protected premises after receipt of the alarm signal. The procedure defined in 2.1.2 above shall be followed if the premises telephone is answered. Otherwise proceed to 3.2.2 or 3.2.3, whichever is applicable.

3.2.2 Call 2 Other Than Premises

When monitoring facility personnel get a busy signal or no answer on the first call to the protected premises, a second call or calls shall be made to an alternate phone number such as a cellular or work number and if the authorized person states that no emergency exists, responding entities shall not be notified or shall be recalled, if already notified, and the alarm considered aborted.

3.2.3 Call 2 Premises

When monitoring facility personnel get a busy signal or no answer on the first call to the protected premises, a second call or calls shall be made to an alternate phone number at the protected premises when such number is available. The procedure defined in 2.1.2 above shall be followed.

3.3 Answering Machines

When any call reaches an answering machine a message shall be left, clearly stating that it is the alarm company calling and leaving necessary information for the alarm user to promptly contact the monitoring facility.

3.4 Scheduled Events

If an alarm signal is received in connection with a scheduled opening or closing event, additional telephone numbers shall be called on the call list in order to determine whether the alarm signal is caused by an opening or closing error. If no answer or no determination can be made that a false alarm exists, a Notification Call shall occur.

3.5 Verified False

If the alarm is verified as being false during the first, second or succeeding calls, monitoring facility personnel shall suspend activities relating to the specific signal being worked.

3.6 Call lists and Priority

Following the Notification Call, attention shall be placed on contacting the emergency call list, until someone is reached to achieve a cancellation of the notification if it is determined that no emergency exists.

3.7 Additional Methods

Audio verification, video verification, cross zoning or other electronic verification mediums shall be permitted in place of or in addition to the second verification call and shall be considered in compliance with this enhanced verification standard.

4 Hold-Up

4.1 Commercial Hold-Up Alarm

Unless otherwise noted by Special Instructions, the monitoring facility shall not call the protected premises but shall make a Notification Call.

4.2 Residential Panic/Duress/Emergency Alarm

The monitoring facility shall follow the Standard Verification Procedures as defined in section 2.0.

5 Residential Fire Alarms

5.1 Households

For purposes of this standard, “household” is defined in NFPA 72 August 2002 as the family living unit in single-family detached dwellings, single-family attached dwellings, multifamily buildings and mobile homes. This definition excludes common usage areas in multifamily buildings such as corridors, lobbies, basements, etc. Fire alarm systems covering such excluded areas are not “household” fire alarm systems. The primary purpose of fire alarm systems in households is to provide an audible signal to occupants in order to expedite evacuation of the household. Further explanatory material on this can be found in Annex A.

5.1.1 Household Fire Alarm Signal

The procedures defined in the NFPA 72 code shall be followed for household fire alarm signals.

6 Commercial Fire Alarms

6.1

For the purpose of this standard, a commercial fire alarm is defined as all fire alarm systems in all properties other than households as defined in 5.1 above

6.2 Commercial (Non-Household) Fire Alarm

The procedures defined in the NFPA 72 code shall be followed for commercial (non-household) alarm signals.

Annex A (Informative)

A.2.1.2.1

If the monitoring facility personnel reaches the protected premises on the first or second call and the person answering the phone does not have the proper pass code then, if possible, the personnel may attempt to make a 3-way call with the premises person retained as a party to the call. The monitoring facility personnel may attempt to reach others on the call list to verify the authenticity of the person on the protected premises. If this process fails to resolve the issue then the monitoring facility personnel should proceed to make a Notification Call.

A 3.2

Verification Phone Accessibility Guideline. Care should be taken to verify that the emergency call list phone numbers are to phones without call waiting, or alternately that *70 is programmed in front of the monitoring center phone number in the electronic digital communicator. The verification phones at the monitored premises should be accessible after hours (not locked up in an office), such as in the vicinity of commonly used entrances and not be sent to voice mail after hours so the after hours users and cleaning people can hear and answer the phone.

A 5.1

NFPA #72 states that “This code {Household Warning Equipment} is primary concerned with life safety, not with the protection of property. It presumes that the family has an exit plan.”