

**MILWAUKEE FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
**Operational Guidelines**

Approved by: Chief Mark Rohlfing  
*Compliant with Milwaukee County Shared Services SOG #7.0*

2019

**1.0 – ALARM (Alarm Sounding)**

## PURPOSE

Alarm Sounding responses have the potential to become one of the most dangerous responses for urban firefighters. **Always perform a professional and thorough investigation.** All such responses should be regarded as potential working fire incidents until a thorough investigation proves otherwise. Always anticipate a working fire and operate accordingly.

## SCOPE

Alarm sounding calls encompass a variety of building types and occupancy uses. Each present a significant challenges.

**Residential** alarms generally are easier to investigate as the structure size is relatively small and there is usually visual access that can be gained, if even from a ladder.

**Multi-family dwelling** alarms can be problematic in that the building size is larger and some annunciator panels do not indicate the specific location of the alarm in a clear or understandable manner

**Commercial buildings or large institutional buildings** (schools, nursing homes, high-rise residential & high-rise commercial, etc.) require a thorough interior investigation. Many times, a building superintendent or security guard is present and can verify the status of the building and provide access as needed.

Any time access to a building is obtained via forcible entry, request Police Department response so they can secure the building upon our departure. If evidence of a prior break-in is found, use extreme caution and request Police Department for investigation.

If no reason for alarm is found after thorough investigation, MFD companies shall not deactivate or reset any alarm systems. This is the building owner's responsibility.

## GUIDELINE

1. Establish Command
2. Size up conditions on the exterior of the building
  - a. Attempt to gain a complete a 360° survey of the structure.
3. Position apparatus
  - a. Identify the presence and location of the nearest hydrant(s) and Fire Department Connection(s) (FDC)
  - b. Position the Truck Company in an advantageous position, preferably with the turntable at the corner of the building

4. Determine strategy & incident action plan
5. Initiate and maintain communications
  - a. Provide first in report
  - b. Ensure the rig V-Tac is set to the proper incident talk group.
6. Attempt to gain access to the main point of entry and/or speak with any available building staff or fleeing occupants.
  - a. investigate the interior of the structure
7. Implement incident action plan as appropriate to the investigation
8. Provide follow up and progress reports as necessary
9. Transfer command to appropriate entity once incident has been mitigated