

205 POLICE ALARM RESPONSE (BANKS AND SAVINGS & LOANS)

Robbery Alarm (Dispatcher Responsibility)

Upon receipt of a robbery alarm (during business hours) the dispatcher will assign patrol unit(s) immediately to the location.

The dispatcher on receipt of the alarm at the LEC will call the bank or s&l, identify himself/herself, and ask whether a robbery has occurred or is in progress. The questioning should be simple and direct, such as, "this is the police, your alarm has been activated, are you being robbed?" If the answer is NO!, then the dispatcher will instruct the employee to have one of the bank or s&l officer(s) meet with the responding police officer(s) outside the building. The dispatcher will stress to the employee that responding officer(s), if not promptly met, will assume that a robbery is in progress. Units will be dispatched to the robber location even when it appears that a false alarm has occurred. If a robbery is in progress, the dispatcher will first ask the employee can relate what is occurring to the dispatcher.

As soon as it is safe to talk or when the robbers have left the premises, the dispatcher will obtain all available information about the robbery (i.e., the number of suspects, descriptions, weapons, transportation, etc.) and relay this information to all police units.

Alarm verification calls are not, however, entirely foolproof. If the dispatcher receives no answer, this is usually a reliable indication that the alarm is genuine. However, when there is an answer, thought must always be given to the possibility that the victim is being coerced to talk or that a robber is answering the call himself.

Police Response (Police Officer Responsibility)

Units responding to the alarm should be observant of any suspects fleeing the area wither on foot or in an automobile. When approaching the robbery site, police officers should try to maintain the element of surprise by not being heard of observed by the suspect(s). Use of emergency warning equipment should be curtailed as the police vehicle nears the scene, and officers should remain out of sight from the building as near as possible. Vehicles should not be parked in front of the bank or s&l being robbed. (This could create a hostage situation).

When approaching the crime scene, officers should visually survey the area for a possible "lookout" working with whoever is inside. A car parking in a "no parking" area with its engine running near the robbery site may possibly be such a vehicle. if an apparent lookout vehicle is spotted, but is far enough away from the scene not to present a threat, the officer should notify the dispatcher concerning the vehicle and occupant and alert other responding units to apprehend the suspects in the vehicle. When no lookout is encountered, the first unit responding to the robbery scene should take a position to cover the main entrance without being seen from within the building. The second unit to arrive should be positioned so that the officers can cover the second most likely route of escape for the suspects without being observed from within the building. (This may cause a problem as we may not have two units that can respond at all times. If this is the case, cover the building alone as best you can.

Robbery in Progress (Police Officer Responsibility)

The specific actions of police officers at a robbery in progress obviously depend on the circumstances encountered. Important factors that determine police actions include the number of officers and suspects, the weapons, if any, of the suspects the number and positions of innocent persons at the robbery scene, and potential escape routes. Officers will request backup units from other agencies that can respond with the least amount of delay. (See Mutual Aid Agreement)

First and foremost is concern for citizen and employee safety. A basic rule is that officers ordinarily should not enter holdup premises while a robbery is in progress or take any other action that might endanger the safety of victims or bystanders. Being in a position to see what is happening, officers can make better decisions about what action to take. (Armed robbers who feel trapped because of the presence of police may take hostages to be used as shields or passports). Officer shall, however, intervene immediately, when victims are being assaulted.

If possible, let the suspect(s) clear the crime scene and trap them where a hostage situation or innocent party problem is less likely. It may be to our advantage in this area to conduct a felony stop on a highway outside of the city limits. If a hostage situation should occur at any point in this type of response, there may be a thin line between intervention because of an assault or the risk of loss of life of the hostage. The officer must consider the immediate safety of the hostage as primary. (See Police Weapons Policy and Barricaded Suspect and Hostage Situations Policy).

Robbery Complete (Officer, Witnesses, Bank and S&L Officials)

When responding to calls where the robber has left the scene, officers should first insure that any injured are provided treatment. Then all witnesses should be separated, given suspect description sheets, (provided by the institutions security officer) and should be discouraged from discussing the robbery among themselves until interviewed by officers. Speed is essential here but so is accuracy. Pertinent information concerning the number of suspects, descriptions, mode of travel, and property taken should be immediately dispatched to all interested parties. Institution officials will be following their policy on security matters and cooperation is the key.

Institution Security Officer

In Breckenridge each bank and s&l have certain state and federal regulations that must be compiled with, such as security programs. These programs provide for training, and for periodic retraining of employees in their responsibilities, including the proper use of security devices and proper employee conduct during and after a robbery. Police are aware of these requirements and will expect full cooperation in the identification of and prosecution of the suspects.