



CLEVELAND DIVISION OF POLICE

GENERAL POLICE ORDER



EFFECTIVE DATE: OCTOBER 2, 2024	CHAPTER: 4 – Field Operations	PAGE: 1 of 3	NUMBER: 4.07.10
SUBJECT: SCHOOL EMERGENCY RADIO ALARM (SERA) PROGRAM			
CHIEF: <i>Dorothy A. Todd, Chief</i>			

PURPOSE: To provide guidance to dispatchers, officers, and supervisors responding to incidents that are reported via the School Emergency Radio Alarm (SERA). SERA is not a type of incident itself, but a means to report urgent and life-threatening incidents that are possible at a school and required immediate response until the type of assignment is determined.

POLICY: **It is the policy of the Cleveland Division of Police** to ensure that the safety and security of schools within Cleveland are a priority for the City of Cleveland and the Division of Police. Immediate notification and a detailed response plan is key to mitigate an urgent or life threatening event in and around schools. The SERA program is designed for direct and immediate notification.

DEFINITIONS:

School Emergency Radio Alarm (SERA) - a program to give schools the ability to send an alarm signal through the statewide Multi Agency Radio Communication System (MARCS) directly to the Communications Control Section (CCS). When activated, SERA will send an emergency alert tone (similar to Division member’s radio emergency alarm) to CCS, immediately followed by 30 seconds of broadcast information for the CCS to possibly determine the nature of the alert. SERA is designed for use in circumstances when school personnel are unable, cannot get through, or do not have time to use 911.

PROCEDURES:

- I. SERA Alert
 - A. The SERA Alert is used for urgent and life-threatening incidents including but not limited to:
 - 1. Active threats
 - 2. Hostage situations
 - 3. Intruder with a weapon or making threats of death or serious bodily harm.
 - B. IS NOT intended to replace 911.
- II. SERA Alert Initiated Assignments
 - A. Dispatchers shall:

PAGE: 2 of 3	SUBJECT: SCHOOL EMERGENCY RADIO ALARM (SERA) PROGRAM	NUMBER: 4.07.10
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1. Notify officers when an assignment comes in utilizing SERA.
 2. Attempt to dispatch four officers and one supervisor.
 3. Relay important information to responding units:
 - a. Number of suspect(s)
 - b. Physical and clothing description of suspect(s)
 - c. Description of suspect weapon(s)
 - d. Last known location or movement of suspect(s)
 - e. Special information about the incident location
 4. Notify the Cleveland Metropolitan School District Police Department (CMSD PD) if the school is a member of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. Private or charter schools should be contacted directly.
 5. Make notifications to CCS supervisors and Cleveland EMS/Fire, advising of alarm activation.
 6. Contact the school, whether public or private, at the request of the officers.
- B. Officers and supervisors dispatched to an assignment initiated by a SERA alert shall:
1. Be aware that:
 - a. First responding officers' actions are critical to the event's outcome.
 - b. The first arriving officer is in charge of the scene as the ad-hoc incident commander, until relieved by a superior/commanding officer.
 2. Immediately respond to the assignment as required in GPO 4.07.11 Active Threat.
 3. Be aware that other agencies and officers may be responding, including but not limited to:
 - a. Division of Fire.
 - b. Emergency Medical Services (EMS).
 - c. Plain clothes officers (refer to GPO [4.08.07](#); Officer Safety – Plain Clothes and Off-Duty).
- C. When it is determined what type of incident the SERA alert was used for, officers shall transition to following the directives described in the General Police Order(s) that correspond to that type of incident.

PAGE: 3 of 3	SUBJECT: SCHOOL EMERGENCY RADIO ALARM (SERA) PROGRAM	NUMBER: 4.07.10
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III. SERA Alerts Reported as Accidental or False

A. Dispatchers notified that the assignment is accidental or false shall:

1. Notify responding units that the assignment may be accidental or false.
2. Attempt a call back to confirm the information when requested by officers on scene.
3. Identify an employee to meet officers outside the building at the request of officers on scene.

B. Officers and supervisors notified that the assignment is accidental or false shall:

1. Continue to follow the directives of this order until the incident is proven to be accidental or false.
2. Use the procedures described in GPO 3.2.04 Silent Hold Up Alarms until the alert is confirmed false or accidental.
 - a. A minimum of two uniformed police officers shall meet the designated institution or agency employee outside the building entrance.
 - b. The police officers and employee shall cautiously enter the building to verify the status of the alarm.
 - c. A minimum of two uniformed police officers shall maintain building surveillance while the alarm status is verified.
3. Officers shall immediately notify CCS of the alarm status.

THIS ORDER SUPERSEDES ANY PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DIRECTIVE OR POLICY FOR THIS SUBJECT AND WILL REMAIN EFFECTIVE UNTIL RESCINDED OR SUPERSEDED.

DAT/BM/arg
Community Police Commission
Communication Control Section
Policy Unit