



FACT SHEET

APCO/CSAA ANS 2.101.1-2008: Alarm Monitoring Company to Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) External Alarm Interface Exchange

Brief Description

The purpose of this voluntary consensus-based American National Standard (ANS), also known as Alarm 3.0, is to provide a standardized data exchange for the electronically transmitted alarm information between an alarm monitoring company and a PSAP. There are three primary uses for this Information Exchange Package Document (IEPD):

- Initial notification of an alarm event
- Bi-directional update of status between an alarm monitoring company and the PSAP
- Bi-directional update of other events between an alarm monitoring company and a PSAP

Stakeholders

Primarily Alarm Manufacturing Company, PSAPs, and PSAP Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) software providers. Software meeting this standard will allow Alarm Monitoring Companies and PSAPs to exchange data electronically instead of over a telephone. When PSAPs choose to implement software meeting this standard, response time and human error will decrease.

Key Facts

- If a PSAP decides to implement this software allowing for exchanges between Alarm Monitoring Companies:
 - The electronic exchange simply replaces the traditional telephone call that the alarm company operator places to the PSAP when there is a need to generate a law, fire, or emergency medical response. A data exchange would now take place between the alarm company operator from the alarm company's computer system to the CAD system in the PSAP. Upon receipt of the electronic transmission between the alarm company and the PSAP's CAD system, all of the details regarding the alarm location will automatically become a call-for-service and appear in front of the radio operator for dispatch immediately.
 - The same information that the calltakers formerly entered into CAD will still appear on the radio operator's CAD screen and provide all the information that is needed for the radio operator to dispatch the call.
 - The alarm company is still responsible for notifying the PSAP of an alarm, with the new standard it is done electronically without having to make a telephone call to the PSAP.
 - The new standard will not cause a reduction nor an increase in the number of alarm events received by a PSAP from an alarm monitoring company.
 - The new standard is not designed to reduce the number of false alarms. There are other initiatives underway to address the problem of false alarms.
 - The standard has no affect on automatic dialer alarms whatsoever. The standard only addresses those alarms which are monitored by alarm monitoring companies.
 - The first indication of a new alarm in the PSAP is when it appears in front of the radio operator/dispatcher on their CAD screen for dispatch to law, Fire, and/or Emergency Medical resources.

- This standard does not change the way in which alarm companies receive the alarm once a triggering event occurs. The standard only affects the delivery of the call-for-service between the alarm company and PSAP.
- The electronic transmission of data includes if the alarm is medical, fire or law – this is a mandatory field. It also includes details on the physical location within a structure, the name of the premises, and several other pieces of information relevant to the alarm event and the premises. If the premises is a residence, the owner’s name is included. The information delivered electronically is exactly the same information traditionally delivered by the alarm company operator via voice telephone communication with the 9-1-1 calltaker.
- When the alarm company has additional information concerning a key-holder response, the alarm company can electronically transmit this additional information as an “update” at anytime and the call-for-service will be updated in the CAD. The radio operator will see this additional information to inform first responders.
- If an alarm company receives notice of a cancellation code, the alarm company operator can send an “update” electronically to the PSAP and this information will be added to the call-for-service. The radio operator will see this update on their CAD screen to relay to the First Responders who are already en-route.
- The standard does not provide a means to capture data from alarm panels. There is always a human being on the alarm company side initiating the electronic exchange once they receive notice of a new alarm on their panel.
- Multiple transport paths are possible. Nlets has a direct link to every state and the first participating alarm company, Vector Security, has a VPN arrangement to Nlets. With the proper NAT rules in place at Nlets and then the state of Virginia Swith, end-to-end pings from the PSAPs back to the alarm company are quick and seamless.
- The transmissions between Nlets and states are encrypted for the security of the data.
- The protocol used is a TCP socket session.
- A PSAP must have a CAD system in place. If there is no CAD system, then the alarm companies will still need to call the PSAP via telephone.
- The pilot PSAPs, after implementing this software, have estimated a reduced call processing time of up to three minutes which translates to an overall reduction in response times.

Next Steps

- When implementing this software within your CAD system, it is important during the development phase the participating alarm companies and the PSAP understand all of the possible alarm types that could be transmitted and how the PSAP will respond to each type. This standard provides a list of recommended event types. We encourage all PSAPs to have a response plan for any type of alarm that it might receive.
- Discuss the benefits of implementing data exchange with alarm companies and contact APCO to get further involved.
- This will take time to implement within a PSAP and is completely voluntary. There are many benefits to implementing this project.
- This software allows for interoperable data exchanges between alarm monitoring companies’ computer systems and PSAP CAD systems. Your CAD system shall use software developed using this standard to ensure interoperability.

More information

Visit <http://www.apco911.org/new/commcenter911/APCOstandards.php> for the following information:

- Download the Standard for free
- Download the Information Exchange Package Document (IEPD)
- Review Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- Additional contact information provided for additional questions and information

E-mail standards@apco911.org