FACT SHEET
APCO/CSAA ANS 2.101.1-2008: Alarm Monitoring Company to Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) Automated Secure Alarm Protocol (ASAP) (Formerly Known as the External Alarm Interface Exchange)

Brief Description

The purpose of this voluntary consensus-based American National Standard (ANS), also known as ASAP, is to provide a standardized data exchange for the automated transmission of 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 by an alarm monitoring company to a PSAP
- Update of status by the PSAP's CAD system to the alarm monitoring company
  - Alarm Notification Accepted, call-for-service created
  - Alarm Notification Reject due to invalid alarm location address or invalid event type
- Bi-directional update of other events between an alarm monitoring company and a PSAP
  - Requests for cancellation by the alarm monitoring company
  - Updates concerning key-holder information by the alarm monitoring company
  - Notice by the PSAP that the primary response agency has been dispatched
  - Notice by the PSAP that the primary response agency has arrived on scene
  - Notice by the PSAP that the event has been closed (with a disposition if applicable)
  - Updates from the PSAP dispatcher or field resource requesting additional information such as an estimated time of arrival for the key-holder

Stakeholders

Primarily 9-1-1 PSAPs, Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) software providers, Alarm Monitoring Companies, and Alarm Automation Providers. Software meeting this standard will allow Alarm Monitoring Companies and PSAPs to exchange data using automation instead of over a telephone. When PSAPs choose to implement software meeting this standard, response time and human error will decrease.

Key Facts - How ASAP works:

- The automated exchange simply replaces the traditional telephone call that the alarm company operator places to the PSAP when there is a need to generate an alarm notification when a law, fire, or emergency medical response is required. A data exchange is initiated between the alarm company operator from the alarm company's computer system to the CAD system in the PSAP. Upon receipt of the alarm notification from the alarm monitoring company by the PSAP's CAD system, all 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 formerly entered by calltakers 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 using software automation 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 the call-for-service appears on the radio operator/dispatcher's 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 nor does it remove any responsibility on the part of the alarm company to conduct call verification procedures when required. The standard only affects the delivery of the alarm notification data between the alarm company and PSAP.
- The automated alarm notification includes the premises address and type of alarm, both mandatory fields. Alarms can be medical, fire, or law related but the PSAP decides which alarm types it will accept. Details about 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 are included. If the premises is a residence, the alarm subscriber's name is included. The information delivered to the PSAP is, at a minimum, the same information traditionally delivered by the alarm company operator via voice telephone communication with the 9-1-1 calltaker, but often more information is provided.
- When the alarm company has additional information concerning a key-holder response, the alarm company can 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" 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.
- Whereas the ANS does not specify a specific transport path, multiple transport paths are possible. ASAP currently uses a Central Station Alarm Association Message Broker which facilitates connectivity to the alarm companies. The Message Broker moves the message to the Nlets message switch. Nlets has a direct link to every state and each state control point connects most primary PSAPs. Messages are routed based on Originating Agency Identifiers (ORI). New transport paths will be explored as new technologies evolve such as Next Generation 9-1-1.
- The transmissions between Nlets and states are encrypted for the security of the data.
- 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.

Proven Benefits - What PSAPs can expect:

- A significant reduction in 7-digit line telephone call volumes from alarm companies
- A significant reduction in 9-1-1 processing time from minutes to seconds. Overall response times in the primary agency reaching the scene is reduced by the same amount. This results in:
    - An increased liklihood of law enforcement apprehensions due to a faster response
    - Fires more quickly extiguished
    - More lives saved
- Elimination of errors and mis-communications; possible reduction in civil suits

Next Steps

- PSAPs should contact their CAD provider to determine the availability of the ASAP interface.
- When implementing this application in the CAD system, it is important during the development phase that the participating alarm companies and the PSAPs 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. PSAPs should have a response plan for each alarm type.
- Discuss the benefits of implementing the ASAP data exchange with alarm companies and contact APCO to get further involved.
- ASAP will take time to implement within a PSAP and is completely voluntary. The benefits are many.
- This standard provides a blue print for interoperable data exchanges between alarm monitoring companies' computer systems and PSAP CAD systems. The 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 (FAQs)
- Additional contact information provided for additional questions and information

E-mail standards@apco911.org