COPP 11.8 Duress Alarms

Prison

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| Principle As referenced in the [Guiding Principles for Corrections in Australia, 2018](http://justus/intranet/department/standards/Pages/ops-standards.aspx):  3.2.1. Comprehensive strategies, systems and procedures to detect, deter and prevent incidents that impact on the safety or security of correctional services, staff, the community or prisoners/offenders are developed and implemented. |

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# Scope

This Commissioner’s Operating Policy and Procedure (COPP) applies to all prisons administered by or on behalf of the Department of Justice (the Department).

# Policy

The Duress Alarm System (DAS) includes mobile and fixed alarms and assists with the provision of a rapid response to possible and actual incidents. It is designed to alert central control and/or duty room staff to the location of any staff member or visitor (other than social visitors to prisoners) who consider themselves in imminent danger and require urgent assistance.

All duress alarm activations are to be ‘classified’ as code red emergency situations.

The use of a Mobile Duress Alarm (MDA) is not a replacement for the use of the prison radio system in the calling of operational ‘code red emergencies’. It is designed to be used only when a radio cannot be used.

All staff and visitors (other than social visitors to prisoners) entering a prison shall carry an MDA, unless they are at all times under officer escort.

Officers from the Special Operations Group (SOG) are exempt from carrying an MDA.

All physical and electronic systems installed as part of the DAS are to be maintained to design standards.

# Inventory, Power and Maintenance

## Duress alarm inventory

### The Superintendent shall ensure an inventory of all duress alarms is documented and maintained.

### The inventory shall be stored in a secure location.

### The Superintendent shall determine the person responsible for checking the inventory and the frequency of checking all duress alarms against the inventory.

### The procedure for checking the frequency of all duress alarms against the inventory shall be documented in either the inventory or the prison’s Standing Order.

## Duress alarm power supply and maintenance

### The Superintendent shall ensure:

1. the uninterrupted power supply and emergency power are available to maintain essential duress alarm services in the event of a mains power disruption
2. all physical and electronic systems installed as part of the duress alarm service are maintained to design standards
3. any proposed facility upgrade or change to a building’s configuration that may impact on duress alarm coverage is reported to Procurement, Infrastructure and Contracted Services, prior to any work starting.

# Plans and Response Exercises

## Duress alarm response plan

### The Superintendent shall ensure that a duress response plan is developed, reviewed, amended and re-tested annually to ensure effective responses to duress alarm activations.

### The duress alarm response plan shall include:

a procedure for duress alarm use/activation

action on receipt of a duress alarm activation

coordinated response to an alarm activation (responding officers)

regular duress alarm response exercises.

## Response exercises

### A duress alarm response exercise shall be conducted at least every 3 months for all staff.

# Mobile Duress Alarms

## Carrying an MDA

### The Superintendent shall ensure MDAs are carried in pouches approved by the Department.

### Staff and visitors are to secure MDAs to a belt or lanyard as approved by the Superintendent.

## Staff and visitor MDA functionality test

### Staff and visitors issued with an MDA are to test the MDA to ensure it is functioning prior to commencing duty or entering the prison.

### The Superintendent at each prison shall ensure MDA users and response groups are kept up to date with MDA procedures.

## Return of MDAs

### Gatehouse Officers shall ensure MDAs are returned to the point of issue before staff and visitors exit the prison.

### The Senior Officer (SO) Gatehouse shall ensure all MDAs are accounted for at handover of shift.

## Missing MDAs

### In the event of a missing MDA, staff shall immediately notify the Officer in Charge (OIC) or Security Manager.

### Staff shall submit an incident report for a missing MDA before cessation of duty in accordance with [COPP 13.1 – Incident Notifications, Reporting and Communications](http://justus/intranet/prison-operations/Pages/prison-copps.aspx).

### Where the missing MDA is found, the incident report shall be updated and the OIC or Security Manager informed.

# MDA Functionality Tests

## Daily functionality testing

### The Senior Officer (SO) Gatehouse shall conduct a daily functionality test of a minimum of 10 MDAs to ensure they are in working order.

### The results of the daily functionality test shall be recorded on the [Key and Mobile Duress Alarm](http://justus/intranet/prison-operations/Pages/copp-adult-forms.aspx) Form and in the Gatehouse Occurrence Book.

### Where a MDA is found not to be functioning the SO Gatehouse shall:

### send the MDA for repair and

### request a replacement.

### A MDA not functioning shall not be issued.

### The SO Gatehouse/OIC shall countersign the:

1. completed [Key and Mobile Duress Alarm Form](http://justus/intranet/prison-operations/Pages/copp-adult-forms.aspx)
2. Gatehouse Occurrence Book entries.

### The completed [Key and Mobile Duress Alarm Form](http://justus/intranet/prison-operations/Pages/copp-adult-forms.aspx) shall be submitted to the Security Manager each day.

### Forms shall be saved in the respective Corporate Administrative Folders.

### Corporate Administrative Folders may be requested from [Operational Information Management](https://justus/intranet/records/) by completing a Records Request Form.

## Weekly system functionality tests and MDA reporting accuracy

### Weekly tests shall be conducted to determine system functionality and MDA reporting accuracy against the DAS.

### The Security Manager shall conduct a weekly test of a minimum of 5% of MDAs across various locations within the inner prison. The location of the MDA shall be checked against the DAS system for accuracy.

### The Security Manager shall ensure all weekly tests are recorded in a separate register.

### The register shall contain the following details:

1. date and time of the test
2. name of the person conducting the test
3. result of the test and/or details of any faults
4. any follow up action.

# Standing Orders

### The Superintendent may make and issue a written Standing Order[[1]](#footnote-1) which may include:

1. procedures for checking all duress alarms against the inventory (as outlined in section 3.1)
2. location of all duress alarms
3. issuing and return of MDAs
4. mandatory recording for duress alarm activation
5. a process for reporting and recording:

system functionality breakdown

unserviceable MDAs.

# Annexures

## Related COPPs

* [COPP 13.1 – Incident Notifications, Reporting and Communications](http://justus/intranet/prison-operations/Pages/prison-copps.aspx)

## Definitions and acronyms

| Term | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Code Red | A Code Red emergency situation requires an immediate response by all available staff.  A code red indicates an incident is affecting the good order or security of the prison, or safety of staff and/or prisoners. |
| Commissioner’s Operating Policy and Procedure (COPP) | COPPs are policy documents that provide instructions to staff as to how the relevant legislative requirements are implemented |
| Duress Alarm System (DAS) | The DAS is designed to alert central control and/or duty room staff to the location of any staff member or visitor (other than social visitors to prisoners) who consider themselves in imminent danger and require urgent assistance. |
| Guiding Principles for Corrections in Australia, 2018 | The guidelines and the accompanying principles constitute outcomes or goals to be achieved, rather than a set of absolute standards or laws to be enforced. They represent a statement of intent that each Australian State and Territory can use to develop their own range of relevant legislative policy and performance standards to reflect best practice and community demands. |
| Mobile Duress Alarm (MDA) | Device worn by an individual that can be activated in case of an emergency. |
| Officer in Charge (OIC) | As defined in s 3(1) of the [*Prisons Act 1981*](http://www.slp.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/main_mrtitle_751_homepage.html) and refers to either the designated Superintendent or the officer in charge of a prison at a particular time.  Also includes any contract worker authorised by the Commissioner in accordance with s 15I (1) (a) of the [*Prisons Act 1981*](http://www.slp.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/main_mrtitle_751_homepage.html)to perform the functions of a superintendent in a privately operated prison. |
| Prison officer | A person engaged or deemed to have been engaged to be a prison officer under s13 of the Prisons Act 1981or deemed to have been appointed under s 6 to an office designated. |
| Senior Officer (SO) | A prison officer who has successfully completed the ELTP and department’s Senior Officer promotional process. |
| Superintendent | The Superintendent as defined in s36 of the [*Prisons Act 1981*](#_top)and includes any reference to the position responsible for the management of a private prison under Part IIIA of the [*Prisons Act 1981*](#_top). Does not extend to the Officer in Charge of a prison. |
| Staff | Any person in the paid or unpaid employment of the Department of Justice, Corrective Services, including contractors, subcontractors and volunteers. |

## Related legislation

* *Prisons Act 1981*
* Prisons Regulations 1982

# Assurance

It is expected that:

* Prisons will undertake local compliance in accordance with the [Compliance Manual](http://justus/intranet/department/standards/Pages/monitoring.aspx).
* The relevant Deputy Commissioner will undertake management oversight as required.
* Operational Compliance Branch will undertake checks in accordance with the [Operational Compliance Framework](http://justus/intranet/department/standards/Documents/monitoring-compliance-framework.docx).
* Independent oversight will be undertaken as required.

# Document Information

## Document version history

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Version no | Primary author(s) | Description of version | Date completed | Effective date |
| 0.1 | Operational Policy | Initial draft | 19 March 2019 | N/A |
| 0.2 | Operational Policy | Updated following consultation | 16 April 2019 | N/A |
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| 1.0 | Operational Policy | Approved by the A/Director Operational Policy Compliance and Contracts | 27 July 2020 | 1 September 2020 |
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| 2.0 | Operational Policy | Approved by the A/Director Operational Policy Compliance and Contracts | 4 August 2020 | 1 September 2020 |
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| 3.0 | Operational Policy | Approved by the Commissioner | 09 June 2022 | 10 June 2022 |

1. s.37(1) *Prisons Act 1981* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)