



## **Personal Emergency Response (PERS) Verification and Notification Procedures**

**CS PERS-01-20XX, Central Station Personal Emergency Response System Procedures**

**(version March 14, 2011)**

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Central Station Alarm Association (CSAA)

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**Printed in the United States of America**

Published by

**Central Station Alarm Association**

**8150 Leesburg Pike, Suite 700 Vienna, VA 22182**

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## Foreword

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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This standard was approved by the CSAA PERS Committee on March 14, 2011.

## Introduction

This standard defines the response procedures for a supervising station to Personal Emergency Response System (PERS) alarms transmitted to the supervising station.

PERS monitoring presents a unique set of challenges for central station operators, not unlike 911 personnel who handle medical emergencies. It is important to understand the demographics and unique problems associated with the typical PERS user.

The systems are primarily designed to summon emergency personnel to assist in medical emergencies and are predominantly in the living quarters of the elderly, homebound, medically frail who often have the systems against their wishes. However, most end users often perceive these devices as having provided them their last hope of independence. These devices are frequently placed by children of the elderly, in an effort to provide peace of mind for these children, who often times are unable to check in on them as often as they would like.

PERS customers frequently suffer from advanced memory loss and the inability to learn and focus on product training. Thus follow up training and regular system tests are a vital part of overall system efficiency. The central station operator plays a critical role in the testing procedure, as the end user must actually generate the call by activating a device, most often a pushbutton pendant worn on the body or pinned to an article of clothing. This test is best accomplished by having the central station operator call the end user and requesting an activation of the device. Tests should be conducted as often as possible, ideally once every 30 days, as end users often have fairly rapid degradation of health, memory and cognitive skills. Frequent tests, which often uncover these early symptoms can enhance the services offered by and normally considered standard by PERS providers.

Unlike other monitoring platforms, it is often advisable that monitoring personnel remain on line with the end user until help arrives, as they are frequently agitated, confused, and frightened. They are often locked in and can be calmed and instructed to admit emergency personnel. This procedure can also save time and effort when notifying family members or persons on the notification list, as emergency personnel usually tell the operator details of their treatment and provide information as to where they are taking the end user if further medical treatment is required. Further, operators can provide vital, sometimes life-saving information (like specific end user health issues and medications to emergency personnel. It should also be noted that PERS users often activate their systems just to talk to someone. They often have little contact with the outside world and are lonely or frightened. Many of these calls occur in the late evening and early morning hours, and quite often the conversations are incoherent and rambling, often the result of sleep medications. Operators should be trained in recognizing these situations, as the solution often entails having a neighbor or relative go to the premises and help the disoriented person, rather than dispatching emergency medical personnel, perhaps pulling them away from more serious situations. PERS dispatches exhibit an extremely high false alarm rate.

# Personal Emergency Response (PERS) Notification Procedures

## 1 Scope

This standard is intended to cover the procedures for dispatching emergency response agencies in response to signals received at a Central Station or monitoring facility. These signals would normally indicate a medical emergency, but can be designed to report panic, fire or smoke, and CO signals, and additionally can detect an absence of activity in the premises of the end user. The activity monitor could indicate or detect a possible fall or medical emergency which has rendered the end user unable to activate a signalling device.

### 1.1 General

PERS systems dispatches are historically and predominantly false, due to confusion, fear, and poor training of the end user, so monitoring personnel should have superior communications skills and high patience thresholds. Detailed instructions, notify lists, medical problems and specific medication lists are critical to efficient dispatching when a real emergency exists.

### 1.2 Definitions

#### 1.2.1 Alarm verification

Alarm verification is a generic name given to many techniques used (1) to permit authorized personnel to appropriately identify themselves, thereby preventing emergency response agencies from being requested to respond to situations that do not represent an emergency; and (2) to confirm or deny the validity of alarm signals received at a Central Station or monitoring facility.

## 2 Standard Verification Procedures for PERS Signals

### 2.1 Medical.

2.1.1 Call premises. No passcode required.

2.1.2 If no contact, notify responders unless otherwise directed by end user.

2.1.3 Call notification list

2.2 Panic/Holdup (Use existing procedure)

2.3 Fire (Use NFPA 72 or as required by AHJ)

2.4 CO (Use NFPA 720 and ANSI/CSAA CS-CO-01 or as required by AHJ)

2.5 No Activity (Exhaust entire call list).

**Monitoring facility personnel shall call the protected premises unless special instructions direct them otherwise, for identification and verification of persons authorized to be on the customer's premises. In the event of a medical emergency signal, this identification procedure is not as critical, as the customer may not have the ability to communicate clearly and in an articulate manner.**

#### **2.6 If No Contact**

If there is no answer, the monitoring facility personnel should attempt to reach persons on the customer notification list, unless the monitoring facility personnel have reason to believe no emergency exists.

#### **2.7 If Telephone is Answered**

If the telephone is answered, the monitoring facility personnel shall obtain pass code or other verification indicating that the person answering is authorized to be on the premises. Upon receipt of correct identification, and if the authorized person states that no emergency exists, responding entities shall not be notified or dispatched, or shall be recalled, if already notified or dispatched, that the alarm is considered aborted.

### **3 Enhanced Telephone Verification of emergency signals**

#### **3.1 Extended Time**

#### **3.2 Procedure**

For signals received from PERS systems, the following procedures shall be followed:

##### **3.2.1 Call 1**

The monitoring facility shall attempt telephone verification to the protected premises after receipt of the alarm signal. The procedure defined in **2.1.2** above shall be followed if the premise phone is answered, or if communication is established via two-way voice. Otherwise proceed to **3.2.2.** or **3.2.3**

##### **3.2.2 Call 2 Other Than Premises**

When monitoring facility personnel get a busy signal or no answer on the first call to the protected premises, a second call or calls shall be made to an alternate phone number such as a cellular number or a recall should be made to the premise phone.

##### **3.2.3 Call 2 Premises**

When monitoring facility personnel get a busy signal or no answer on the second call to the protected premises, a third call or calls shall be made to an alternate phone number such as a cellular number or a recall should be made to the premise phone.

#### **3.3 Answering Machines**

When any call reaches an answering machine a message shall be left, clearly stating that it is the alarm company calling and leaving necessary information for the alarm user to promptly contact the monitoring facility.

### **3.4 Scheduled Events**

If an alarm signal is received in connection with a scheduled activity event, additional telephone numbers shall be called on the call list in order to determine whether the alarm signal is caused by an activity error. If no conclusions can be drawn a Notification Call shall be made.

### **3.5 Verified False**

If the alarm is verified as being false during the first, second or succeeding calls, monitoring facility personnel shall suspend activities relating to the specific signal being worked.

### **3.6 Call lists and Priority**

Following the dispatch or notification call, attention shall be placed on contacting people on the emergency call list, until someone is reached.

### **3.7 Additional Methods**

Audio verification, video verification, or other electronic verification mediums shall be permitted in place of or in addition to the second verification call and shall be considered in compliance with this enhanced verification standard.

## **4 PERS Fire Alarms**

### **4.1 Households**

For purposes of this standard, “household” is defined in NFPA 72 August 2002 as the family living unit in single-family detached dwellings, single-family attached dwellings, multifamily buildings and mobile homes. This definition excludes common usage areas in multifamily buildings such as corridors, lobbies, basements, etc. Fire alarm systems covering such excluded areas are not “household” fire alarm systems. The primary purpose of fire alarm systems in households is to provide an audible signal to occupants in order to expedite evacuation of the household.

#### **4.1.1 Household Fire Alarm Signal**

The procedures defined in the NFPA 72 code shall be followed for household fire alarm signals.

## **Annex A (Informative)**

### **A.1**

The monitoring facility personnel may attempt to reach others on the call list to verify the authenticity of the person on the protected premises by initiating a three way call with someone on the emergency contact list. If this process fails to resolve the issue then the monitoring facility personnel should proceed to make a Notification Call.

### **A.2**

Verification Phone Accessibility Guideline. Care should be taken to verify that the emergency call list phone numbers are to phones without call waiting, or alternately that \*70 is programmed in front of the monitoring center phone number in the electronic digital communicator.

### **A.3**

NFPA #72 states that “This code {Household Warning Equipment} is primary concerned with life safety, not with the protection of property. It presumes that the family has an exit plan.”