

**LESSON PLAN  
PART I  
COVER SHEET**

**LESSON TITLE:** USAF Alarm Signals and Actions

**TRAINING METHOD:** Lecture

**ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERN:** Topical

**REFERENCES:** AFI 32-4001, Disaster Preparedness Planning and Operations (1 May 98)  
AFH 32-4014 volume 4 (1 Mar 98)  
NATO Standardization Agreement (STANAG) 2047, Emergency Alarms  
of Hazard or Attack (NBC and Air Attack Only)

**AIDS AND HANDOUTS:** AFVA 32-4010, USAF Standardized Alarm Signals for the  
United States, its Territories and Possessions (1 Nov 1998)  
AFVA 32-4011, USAF Standardized Alarm Signals for Areas  
Subject to NBCC Attack (1 Dec 1998)  
AFVA 32-401, Mission-Orientated Protective Postures (MOPP)  
(1 Feb 1998)

**LESSON OBJECTIVE:** Given information on the alarm signals and the protective actions  
associated with each, answer questions that demonstrate mastery of at least three samples of  
behavior listed below.

**SAMPLES OF BEHAVIOR:**

1. Describe methods of transmitting USAF standardized alarm signals.
2. Identify alarm signals used in the US, its territories and possessions.
3. Identify USAF standardized alarm signals used in areas subject to nuclear, biological,  
chemical, or conventional (NBCC) attack.
4. Identify protective actions associated with each alarm signal.
5. State the plans units should consult for information on alarm signals prior to deploying.

**SUGGESTED COURSE(S) OF INSTRUCTION:** NBC Defense Training  
Base Populace Training

**STRATEGY:** It is essential that students know how to properly respond to enemy attacks. They  
must understand how important it is to act quickly and correctly. Emphasize that the USAF  
alarm signals are only a framework for alerting. Actual signals can and do change depending on  
host country constraints and local needs. Also, the instructor is encouraged to write samples of  
behavior and test items to cover local procedures.

**LESSON OUTLINE:**

- MAIN POINT 1.   METHODS OF SIGNALING
  - a. Sirens
  - b. Voice
  - c. Flags
  - d. Metal Against Metal
  - e. Local Procedures
  
- MAIN POINT 2.   USAF STANDARDIZED ALARM SIGNALS FOR THE US, ITS TERRITORIES AND POSSESSIONS
  - a. Attack Warning
  - b. Peacetime Emergency or Alert Warning
  - c. All Clear
  
- MAIN POINT 3.   USAF STANDARDIZED ALARM SIGNALS FOR AREAS SUBJECT TO NBCC ATTACK
  - a. Alarm Yellow
  - b. Alarm Red
  - c. Alarm Black
  - d. All Clear
  
- MAIN POINT 4.   VARIATIONS



**PART II**  
**TEACHING PLAN**  
**INTRODUCTION**

- ATTENTION:** All installations have an alarm signal system to warn or inform you of an impending attack, disaster, or emergency situation.
- MOTIVATION:** This system uses easily understood signals to alert us so you can take appropriate protective measures.
- OVERVIEW:** During this lesson we will discuss:
1. Methods of signaling.
  2. USAF standardized alarm signals for the United States, its Territories and Possessions.
  3. USAF standardized alarm signals and actions for areas subject to nuclear, biological, chemical, and conventional (NBCC) attack.
  4. Signals for deploying units.
- TRANSITION:** Let's first discuss methods of signaling.

## MAIN POINT 1. METHODS OF SIGNALING

### a. SIRENS

**BODY**  
Alarm signals provide a rapid, easy method of communicating critical disaster information. Redundancy is built into the system to ensure that everyone is quickly warned. There are several ways you may be notified. These include:

A wavering or steady siren sounded in a continuous or broken tone.

### b. VOICE

A verbal announcement over the base public address system, radios, television, may state the alarm condition, mission oriented protective posture (MOPP), or other emergency action instructions.

### c. FLAGS

Colored flags used as a visual warning. These flags are posted on flag poles, vehicles or buildings.

### d. METAL AGAINST METAL

The sound of metal beating against metal.

### e. LOCAL PROCEDURES

**INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE:** Cover local procedures.

## TRANSITION:

Now let's talk about each alarm signal in detail.

**INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE:** Use AFVA 32-4010 to help teach Main Point 2.

MAIN POINT 2. USAF  
STANDARDIZED  
ALARM SIGNALS FOR  
THE US, ITS  
TERRITORIES AND  
POSSESSIONS

a. ATTACK WARNING

1) SIGNAL

There are three types of warning signals used in the US, its territories, and possessions. They are attack warning, peacetime emergency or alert warning, and all clear.

An attack warning is used to warn of an impending attack, an actual attack, an accidental missile launch against the US, or the imminent arrival of nuclear fallout.

The attack warning signal is a 3 to 5 minute wavering tone on sirens, or a 3 to 5 minute period of short blasts on horns, whistles, or similar devices.

2) PROTECTIVE  
ACTIONS

Take immediate cover in your protective shelter.

3) LOCAL PROCEDURES

List local procedures
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b. PEACETIME  
EMERGENCY OR  
ALERT WARNING

A peacetime emergency or alert warning is used to inform people of a disaster or emergency, or that a potential or actual hazard to the public's health, safety, and/or property exists.

1) SIGNAL

The peacetime emergency or alert warning signal is a 3 to 5 minute steady tone on sirens or long, steady blasts on whistles or similar devices.

2) PROTECTIVE  
ACTIONS

**INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE:** A memory trick that seems to help students is to use the "sounds alike" idea -- wavering for war, steady for disaster.

Be prepared to take immediate shelter. Listen to local radio, television, or public address for emergency information.

## 3) LOCAL PROCEDURES

List local procedures

## TRANSITION:

Now let's talk about how we get the ALL CLEAR to resume normal operations.

## c. ALL CLEAR

All Clear is used when the threat condition or emergency is terminated.

## 1) SIGNAL

All Clear is announced verbally by local officials through radio, television, and public address systems.

## 2) ACTION

Resume normal operations or initiate recovery actions, if warranted.

**INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE:** Use AFVA 32-4011 to help teach Main Point 3.

MAIN POINT 3. USAF  
STANDARDIZED  
ALARM SIGNALS FOR  
AREAS SUBJECT TO  
NBCC ATTACK

We use four basic alarm signals in NBCC threat areas. These are the basic signals and may be supplemented or changed due to mission requirements, host nation agreements, etc. We'll cover some of the variances in a later point. However, the basic signals are:

- ⇒ Alarm Yellow
- ⇒ Alarm Red
- ⇒ Alarm Black
- ⇒ All Clear

a. ALARM YELLOW

Alarm Yellow means an attack is probable, and an attack on the installation could occur soon. You must be prepared to assume a full protective posture on a very short notice.

1) SIGNALS

Alarm Yellow signals are a voice announcement of "Alarm Yellow" or yellow flags posted around the installation.

2) PROTECTIVE  
ACTIONS

Protective actions taken during Alarm Yellow differ depending upon the type of threat you are in.

a) CHEM/BIO  
THREAT

In areas subject to chemical or biological attack:

- Assume MOPP 1 unless otherwise directed.

**INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE:** RTP C12 covers recent changes to the MOPP Levels (including the addition of MOPP Level Alpha) to allow Installation Commanders more flexibility when field conditions require less protection. Reference AFVA 32-4012 (1 Feb 1998).

- Continue performing essential duties. Take cover in your assigned shelter as directed.

- Cover critical equipment or supplies to protect them from liquid agents during an attack. Move critical equipment inside shelters or any facility for covering, or cover them with plastic, tarp, boxes, etc. Close facility and vehicle doors and windows as well as aircraft canopies.

b) CONVENTIONAL  
THREAT

If no chemical or biological threat exists, don your helmet and go to your shelter when directed to do so.

3) LOCAL  
PROCEDURES

List local procedures

TRANSITION:

As the threat increases, the next alarm condition is "Alarm Red".

b. ALARM RED

Alarm Red means an attack is imminent or in progress.

1) SIGNALS

Alarm Red signals are:

a) SIRENS

A one minute warbling tone on sirens or a succession of blasts (3 seconds on - 1 second off) on horns, whistles, etc.

b) VOICE

A voice announcement of "Alarm Red".

c) FLAGS

Red flags posted around the installation.

2) PROTECTIVE  
ACTIONS

Protective actions for Alarm Red must be automatic and immediate because your survival is at stake.

a) GENERAL

General protective actions during Alarm Red include:

- Warn other people around you who may not have heard or seen the signal.
- Stay under cover until Alarm Red is canceled. Even if you don't hear activity, the enemy could be regrouping for another attack.

- If you see an attack in progress, do not wait for the alarm signal before assuming protective measures. The installation warning system might have been damaged. Assume the worst, protect yourself, then try to warn others.

b) CHEM/BIO THREAT

In areas subject to chemical or biological attack:

- If you're not in a semi-hardened or hardened shelter, take cover immediately. Get behind a revetment, in a trench, inside a hardened aircraft shelter, or other structure that provides good protection against blast, splinters, and shrapnel. If possible, find overhead cover to protect yourself from liquid agents.
- Immediately assume MOPP 4, full protective gear, unless otherwise directed. (Installation CC will direct and disseminate modifications and variations to MOPPs (if any))

c) CONVENTIONAL

In a conventional threat area, get behind a revetment, in a trench, inside a hardened aircraft shelter, or other structure that provides good protection against blast, splinters, and shrapnel.

3) LOCAL PROCEDURES

List local procedures

TRANSITION:

After an NBC attack, the possibility of contamination exists. This threat of contamination would cause us to go to "Alarm Black".

c. ALARM BLACK

Alarm Black means NBC contamination is expected or present. It's normally declared after Alarm Red to give the base time to check for the presence of NBC contamination. Alarm Black is also used if the base receives warning that NBC contamination might drift over from an attack on a location upwind of the base.

1) SIGNALS

Alarm Black signals are:

a) SIRENS

A broken warbling tone on sirens or a succession of blasts (1 second on and 1 second off) on horns, whistles, etc.

b) VOICE

A voice announcement of "Alarm Black", or "Gas, Gas, Gas", or "Fallout, Fallout, Fallout".

c) FLAGS

Black flags posted around the installation.

d) BEATING  
METAL

Continuous beating of metal on metal.

2) PROTECTIVE  
ACTIONS

Protective actions for Alarm Black only apply to NBC threat areas. They do not apply to a conventional only threat area.

a) GENERAL  
ACTIONS

General protective actions during Alarm Black include:

- Mission essential personnel and those designated to conduct initial reconnaissance may cautiously venture out to gather information on the effects of the attack and start recovery. If you don't have a reason to be outside, stay put until the SRC makes a base assessment of the hazards.
- Keep all windows, doors, and aircraft canopies closed.

b) CHEM/BIO  
THREAT

For areas subject to a chemical or biological attack:

- Assume MOPP 4 unless otherwise directed.
- Do not remove your mask or other protective GCE items until directed by the shelter management team or the "All Clear" has been given.

Personnel working outside when Alarm Black is declared can remain outside until the end of their work shift.

How long you spend outside may depend on the amount of contamination. You probably won't be staying until the end of your shift if your groundcrew chem-defense ensemble (GCE) is grossly contaminated or damaged. If that is the case, report to your assigned shelter as soon as possible to obtain a new GCE.

3) LOCAL  
PROCEDURES

List local procedures.

TRANSITION:

How do we know when the situation is safe enough for us to resume normal operations?

d. ALL CLEAR

All Clear is used when an attack is not probable and NBC contamination is not present.

1) SIGNALS

All Clear signals are:

a) REMOVAL  
OF FLAGS

The removal of all colored alarm flags.

b) VOICE

Voice announcement of "All Clear".

2) ACTIONS

Assume MOPP 0 when All Clear is announced and resume normal wartime or recovery operations.

3) LOCAL  
PROCEDURES

List local procedures

**MAIN POINT 4.  
VARIATIONS**

As mentioned earlier, the signals we have covered thus far are basic signals. They are the framework for a warning and alerting system. Depending on mission requirements or host nation agreements the actual alarm signals may vary.

To understand this it's worth mentioning the purpose of NATO standardization agreements or STANAGS. The purpose of a STANAG is to standardize operations between NATO countries. For example, STANAG 2047 covers alarm signals.

However, not all countries agree to everything in STANAG 2047. For example in the Netherlands, the warning for NBC hazards is a yellow flag or sign. As you can see, this could cause confusion between our "*ALARM YELLOW*" and Netherland's use of yellow signals.

Another example, the host country uses a different signal for attack. In Korea, "*ALARM BLUE*" is used in place of "*ALARM RED*".

The point is that deployable units must consult base or joint support plans for specific signals used at their deployed locations.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **SUMMARY:**

During this lesson we covered:

1. Methods of signaling.
2. USAF standardized alarm signals for the US, its Territories, and Possessions.
  - 3 to 5 minute wavering tone for attack
  - 3 to 5 minute steady tone for peacetime disasters.
3. USAF alarm signals and actions for areas subject to NBCC attack.
  - Alarm Yellow
  - Alarm Red
  - Alarm Black and
  - All Clear
4. And finally, signals for deploying units.

### **REMOTIVATION:**

If an alarm signal is used, it's up to you to know what it means and what actions to take. Your life depends on it.

### **CLOSURE:**

This concludes this lesson on USAF alarm signals and actions.

### **TRANSITION:**

(Develop locally to transition to the next topic.)



**PART III**  
**EVALUATION**  
**STUDENT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

**TEST ITEMS**

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1. LESSON OBJECTIVE: Describe methods of transmitting USAF standardized alarm signals.

QUESTION: (True or False)

Sirens, flags, and voice announcements are some of the ways used to announce alarm signals.

- a. True
- b. False

KEY: a

REFERENCE: Main Point 1

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2. LESSON OBJECTIVE: Identify alarm signals used in the US, its Territories and Possessions.

QUESTION: (Multiple Choice)

A 3 to 5 minute wavering tone in the US, its Territories and Possessions, indicates which condition?

- a. Peacetime Emergency
- b. Attack Warning
- c. Alarm Red
- d. All Clear

KEY: b

REFERENCE: Main Point 2

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3. LESSON OBJECTIVE. Identify USAF standardized alarm signals used in areas subject to nuclear, biological, chemical, or conventional (NBCC) attack.

QUESTION: (Multiple Choice)

Which alarm signal indicates an attack is imminent or in progress in a chemical threat area?

- a. Alarm Yellow
- b. Alarm Red
- c. Alarm Black
- d. All Clear

KEY: b

REFERENCE: Main Point 3

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4. LESSON OBJECTIVE. Identify protective actions associated with each alarm signal.

QUESTION: (Multiple Choice)

In an area subject to a NBCC attack, which alarm signal directs personnel to assume MOPP 1, continue essential duties, seek shelter, and cover critical equipment?

- a. Alarm Yellow
- b. Alarm Red
- c. Alarm Black
- d. All Clear

KEY: a

REFERENCE: Main Point 3

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5. LESSON OBJECTIVE. State the plans units should consult for information on alarm signals prior to deploying.

QUESTION: (True or False)

Deployable units should consult base or joint support plans for specific signals used at their deployed locations.

- a. True
- b. False

KEY: a

REFERENCE: Main Point 4



**PART IV**  
**RELATED MATERIALS**

AFVA 32-4010, USAF Alarm Standardized Alarm Signals for the United States, its Territories and Possessions (1 Nov 1997)

AFVA 32-4011, USAF Standardized Alarm Signals for Areas Subject to NBCC Attack (1 Dec 1997)

AFVA 32-4012, Mission Oriented Protective Postures (MOPP) (1 Feb 1998)



**TRAINING PACKAGE COMMENT REPORT**

RTP #

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