

BOMB THREAT and SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE MANAGEMENT

Office of Homeland Security

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Fortunately, the majority of bomb threats and hazardous materials threats are false. Unfortunately, we cannot always assume that they will be - it only has to be real one time. If there is one point that cannot be overemphasized, it is the value of being prepared. By developing a response plan and including it your overall security plan, you can reduce your risk from a suspicious device or package.

An improvised explosive device or a letter containing a hazardous substance can be placed or delivered in any number of ways. Most are homemade and are only limited in their design by the imagination of and resources available to the sender.

Preparing

In preparing to cope with an incident, it is necessary to develop two separate, but interdependent plans - namely a physical security plan and an emergency operations plan.

A physical security plan addresses the protection of property, personnel, and materials; as well as, deals with the prevention of unauthorized persons in your facilities. Your emergency operations plan provides detailed procedures to be implemented when an attack is executed or threatened. Only by using defined procedures can an incident be handled with the least amount of risk to everyone.

In an emergency operations plan, it is vital that a chain of command or line of authority clearly be established. A defined line of authority instills confidence and minimizes panic.

Training is also essential to properly dealing with a threat. It is important that all personnel know what to do if a threat is received. Be absolutely certain that all personnel are aware of their duties and responsibilities. It is also very important to organize and train personnel on how to evacuate the facility, if it becomes necessary.

Receiving a Threat

If a threat comes via the telephone, it is always desirable to record the call or have more than one person listen in on the call. The threat caller is your best source of information

- as such, a calm response to the threat caller could result in you obtaining additional facts. This is especially true if the caller wishes to avoid injuries or deaths.

When a threat is called in:

- Keep the caller on the line as long as possible. Ask him/her to repeat the message. Write down every word spoken by the caller.
- If the caller does not indicate the location of the device or the specific nature of the threat, ask him/her for this information.
- Pay particular attention to background noises, such as motors running, music playing, and any other noise which may give a clue as to the location or identity of the caller.
- Listen closely to the voice: Is it male or female? What is the voice quality - calm or excited? Is there an accent and/or speech impediment?
- Immediately after the caller hangs up, report the information to the police department and other appropriate agencies. The sequence of notification should be established in your emergency operations plan.
- If it is a bomb threat - ask the following:
 - When will the bomb explode?
 - Where is it right now?
 - What does it look like?
 - What kind of bomb is it?
 - What will cause it to explode?
- Remain available - law enforcement will want to speak with you.

If a written threat is received, save all materials - including any envelope or container the threat came in. Once the message is recognized as a threat, further unnecessary handling should be avoided. Every possible effort must be made to retain evidence such as fingerprints, handwriting or typewriting, paper, and postal marks. These will prove essential in tracing the threat and identifying the sender. If the threat is received in an email or text - do not delete, modify, forward, or save the message. Leave it in the original format that you received it in. Any actions that you make to a digital message may modify the original data.

If the threat is made in person, remain calm. Cooperate, but try to alert someone else to what is occurring.

Evaluating and Responding to the Threat

Determining the motive of the caller helps to make a determination if the threat is legitimate or not. Does he or she just want to create panic or did they actually place a device?

Choosing the best response is usually based on how credible you think the threat is. While public safety first responders can obviously assist in making that determination, ultimately, it will be up to the facility management to determine the credibility of the threat and the level of risk.

A *LOW RISK* threat lacks realism. The threat is often vague and indirect and the information in the threat is inconsistent, implausible, or it lacks detail.

A threat should be considered *MEDIUM RISK* if it has an increased level of realism. Meaning that an attack could be carried out, but it does not appear entirely realistic.

A *HIGH RISK* threat is when the threat is direct, specific, and realistic. The threat might include names of possible victims or a specific time/location of the attack, device, or other threat. The offender may state who they are or the threat might suggest that definite steps have been taken toward actually carrying out the attack.

Essentially, there are three available options when faced with a threat:

- Ignore the threat.
- Evacuate immediately.
- Search first and then evacuate, if needed.

While statistical we know that few threats are real, it cannot be overlooked that attacks – both explosive and other types – have occurred. Ignoring the threat completely can result in many problems. However, while evacuating immediately on every threat is an alternative, it is disruptive. Initiating a search after a threat is received and evacuating a building after a suspicious package or device is found maybe the most desired approach.

Ultimately, the correct response is dependent on the situation, facts known at the time, and the organization's policy – there is no one right answer for every incident.

Searching

If the decision is made to conduct a search, it is advisable to use more than one individual to search any area or room, no matter how small. Searches can be conducted by supervisory personnel, area occupants, or trained search teams. There are advantages and disadvantages to each method.

Using supervisors to search causes fewer disturbances. However, using only supervisors to search may not be as thorough because of their unfamiliarity with many areas.

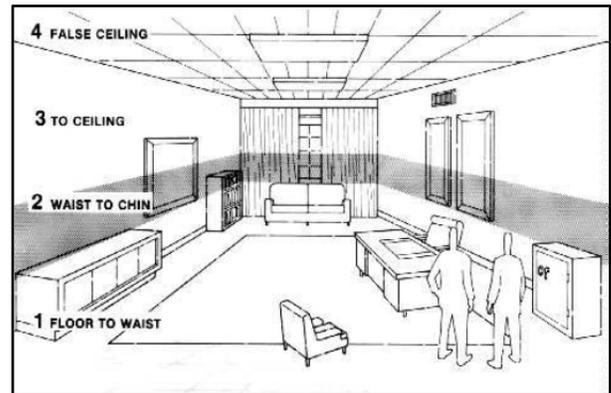
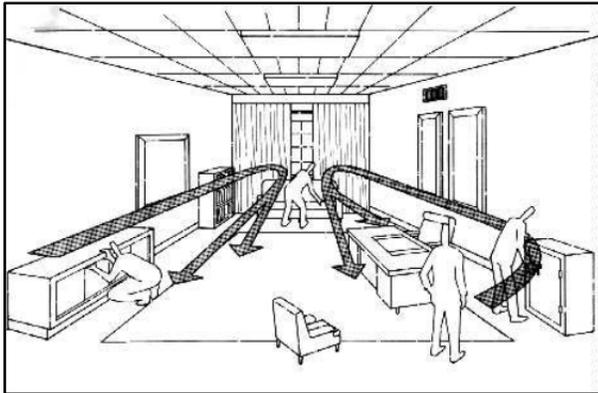
Using area occupants to search their own areas is the best method for a rapid search. The occupants are familiar with what does or does not belong. The drawback is that this method is disruptive, requires the training of an entire work force and, ideally, several practical training exercises.

A search conducted by a trained team is the best for safety, morale, and thoroughness – while it is not as disruptive as an area occupant search, it does training and practice, and it is not a rapid an area occupant search.

Search Techniques

Any room to be searched should be divided into two virtually equal parts. This equal division should be based on the number and type of objects in the room and not on the actual size of the room. The room should be searched in systematic 'sweeps'. The first sweep should cover all items resting on the floor up to the selected height (for example – waist height). The second, third, and fourth sweep should work progressively higher until the entire room has been searched, including any drop ceilings and overhead fixtures.

It is imperative that personnel involved in a search be instructed that their only mission is to search for and report suspicious objects. Under no circumstances should anyone move, jar, or touch a suspicious object or anything attached to it.



Discovery of a Device or Suspicious Package

When a suspicious object is discovered, the following procedures are recommended:

- Report the location and an accurate description of the object to the appropriate authorities.
- Identify the danger area, cordon off, and evacuate a clear zone of at least 300 feet, including floors below and above the object.

If you suspect that the suspicious package may contain a hazardous material type substance (example: ricin, anthrax, etc.)

- Leave the mail or package where it was found. Do not disturb. Do not try to clean the substance.
- Do not touch, taste, smell, or try to identify the substance.
- Clear the immediate area of all persons and keep others away.
- Cordon off the immediate area.
- Instruct people to wash hands and other exposed skin with soap and water, if a wash station is in the immediate area.
- Isolate exposed persons to a designated area away from the substance – but nearby, in order to limit any further contamination of your facility – and await further instruction.
- Shut down all HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning) systems and room fans, heaters, etc.
- Document the location of mail or package.

- Keep a list of the persons in the immediate area of the mail or package.
- Wait for emergency personnel to arrive and follow their instructions regarding changing of clothing and further decontamination.

Recovery from a Threat

One of the hardest and most trying times in these types of incidents is when no actual device or hazardous substance is found and it is believed that the threat is a hoax - someone from your organization will need to make the decision to continue with or suspend regular operations. This decision should be made with input from your local first responders; however, ultimately it will be the decision of the facility's management.

The decision should be based on the determined level of risk - low, medium, or high - and on your physical security and emergency operations plan - as well as, the totality of the circumstances of the incident. Have that conversation with your local first responders and make the decision together.

SUSPICIOUS MAIL OR PACKAGES



- Leave the mail or package where it was found. Do not disturb. Do not try to clean the substance.
- **Immediately call 911**
- Clear the immediate area of all persons and keep others away.
- Cordon off the immediate area.
- Instruct people to wash hands and other exposed skin with soap and water, if a wash station is in the immediate area
- Isolate exposed persons to a nearby designated area away from the substance and await further instruction.
- List the names of the persons in the immediate area of the mail or package.
- Shut down all heating, ventilation, air conditioning, or fans in the room.
- Document the location of mail or package.



BOMB THREAT PROCEDURES

Bomb threats are serious until proven otherwise. Act quickly. Remain calm. Obtain information using the checklist on the reverse of this card.

BOMB THREAT RECEIVED BY

PHONE

- Remain calm. Keep the caller on the phone as long as possible. DO NOT HANG UP, even if the caller does.
- Listen carefully, try to keep the caller talking to learn more information.
- If possible, write a note to a colleague to call the police or, as soon as the caller hangs up, immediately notify them yourself.
- If your phone has a display, copy the number and/or letters on the display window.
- Complete the Bomb Threat Checklist (*reverse side*) immediately. Write down as much information as you can remember.

BOMB THREAT RECEIVED BY

HANDWRITTEN NOTE

- Call the police.
- Handle note as minimally as possible.

BOMB THREAT RECEIVED BY

EMAIL OR TEXT

- Call the police.
- Do not delete the message.

SIGNS OF A

SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE

No return address	Poorly handwritten
Excessive postage	Mispelled words
Stains	Incorrect titles or address
Strange odor	Foreign postage
Strange sounds	Restrictive handling notes
Unexpected delivery	

DO NOT:

- Evacuate the building until police arrive and evaluate the threat.
- Activate the fire alarm.
- Touch or move the suspicious package.
- Use two-way radios or cellular phones; radio signals could detonate a bomb.

BOMB THREAT CHECKLIST

Date: _____ Time: _____
Time Caller Hung Up: _____
Phone Number of Caller: _____

ASK THE CALLER:

- Where is the bomb located? (*building, floor, room, etc*) _____
- When will it go off? _____
- What does it look like? _____
- What kind of bomb is it? _____
- What will make it explode? _____
- Did you place the bomb? Yes No
- Why? _____
- What is your name? _____

EXACT WORDS OF THE THREAT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE CALLER

Where is the caller located? (*describe background/noise level*) _____

Estimated age of caller: _____

Is voice familiar? If so, who does it sound like? _____

<i>Caller's Voice</i>	<i>Background Sounds</i>	<i>Threat Language</i>
accent	animal noises	incoherent
angry	house noises	message read
calm	kitchen noises	taped
clearing throat	street noises	irrational
coughing	PA system	profanity
cracking voice	conversation	well-spoken
crying	music	
deep voice	motor	
deep breathing	clear	
disguised	static	
distinct	office noises	
excited	factory noises	
FEMALE	local	
laughter	long distance	
lisp		
loud		
MALE	Other Information: _____	
nasal	raspy	_____
normal	slow	_____
ragged	slurred	_____
rapid	soft	_____
	stutter	_____

