

## **416 RESPONSE TO BOMB CALLS**

### **416.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

These guidelines have been prepared to assist officers in their initial response to incidents involving explosives, explosive devices, suspected explosive devices, suspicious packages or explosion/bombing incidents. Under no circumstances should these guidelines be interpreted as compromising the safety of first responders or the public. When confronted with an incident involving explosives, safety shall always be the primary consideration.

### **416.2 FOUND EXPLOSIVES/SUSPECT DEVICES**

When an officer responds to a call of a suspected explosive device, the following guidelines shall be followed:

1. The device should not be touched or transported to any other location.
2. No known or suspected explosive item should be considered safe regardless of its size or apparent packaging.
3. The appropriate bomb squad or military explosive ordnance disposal team should be summoned for assistance even when in doubt.
4. A perimeter should be secured for a minimum of 300 feet around the location, or an otherwise safe distance depending on the surrounding physical environment and allowing for ingress of support personnel.
5. As much initial information as possible should be relayed to the Watch Commander without touching the device, including:
  - a. The stated threat
  - b. Exact comments
  - c. Time of discovery
  - d. Exact location of the device
  - e. Full description (e.g., size, shape, markings, construction)
6. Officers should not transmit on any equipment that produces radio frequency energy within 300 feet.
7. Consideration should be given to the possibility of evacuation if a device is located within a building.
8. An additional perimeter should be secured around any suspected device.
9. Officers should consider the ingress/egress of additional support personnel, such as paramedics and fire department personnel.
10. A search of the area should be conducted for secondary devices or other objects that are either hazardous or foreign to the area.
11. Explosive or military ordnance of any type should be handled only by bomb squad technicians.

### **416.3 EXPLOSION/BOMBING INCIDENTS**

When an explosion has occurred, there are multiple considerations that may confront an officer. As in other catastrophic incidents, a rapid response will help to minimize such things as further injury to victims, contamination of the scene by gathering crowds, additional damage from resulting fires or unstable structures.

Whether the explosion was the result of an accident or a criminal act, the officer should consider the following:

- Assess the scope of the incident, including the number of victims and extent of injuries.
- Assist with first -aid.
- Assist with evacuation of victims.
- Identify and take appropriate precautions to mitigate scene hazards such as collapsed structures, blood borne pathogens, hazardous materials and secondary explosive devices.
- Request additional resources as needed.
- Identify witnesses.
- Preserve evidence.
- Existence of additional or secondary devices.

#### **416.3.1 NOTIFICATIONS**

When an explosion has occurred, the following people shall be notified as soon as practicable if their assistance is needed:

1. Fire department and/or state fire marshal
2. Bomb squad
3. Additional officers
4. Field supervisor
5. Watch Commander
6. Investigators
7. Forensic science services
8. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATF)

#### **416.3.2 CROWD CONTROL**

Scene access should be restricted to those with a legitimate public safety purpose.

#### **416.3.3 SCENE OF INCIDENT**

As in any other crime scene, steps should immediately be taken to preserve the scene. The scene could extend over a wide area. Evidence may be imbedded in nearby structures or hanging in trees and bushes.

#### **416.4 BOMB THREATS AT POLICE FACILITY**

This procedure shall be followed should a bomb threat be received at a police facility and a search is initiated for a destructive device.

##### **416.4.1 BOMB THREATS RECEIVED BY TELEPHONE**

The following questions shall be asked if a call of a bomb threat is received at a police facility:

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- When is the bomb going to explode?
- When did you place the bomb?
- What would cause the bomb to explode?
- Where is the bomb?
- What kind of bomb is it?
- What does it look like?
- Why did you place the bomb?
- Where are you?
- Who are you? To avoid possible termination of the call, this should be asked after the preceding questions.

Attempt to keep the caller on the line as long as possible and obtain expanded answers to these prior questions. During this time, document the following:

- Time of the call
- Exact words of the person as accurately as possible
- Estimated age and gender of the caller
- Speech patterns and/or accents
- Background noises
- If the threat is received at a police facility on a recorded line, steps should be taken to ensure that the recording is preserved in accordance with current evidence procedures.

#### **416.4.2 RESPONSIBILITIES**

As soon as a bomb threat has been received, the Watch Commander will be advised and fully informed of the details. The Watch Commander will then direct and assign officers as required for coordinating a general building search or evacuation as deemed appropriate.

#### **416.5 BOMB THREATS AT PUBLIC OR PRIVATE FACILITY**

This procedure shall be followed should a bomb threat occur at a private facility or another public facility and the Department is informed of the threat.

##### **416.5.1 BOMB THREAT RESPONSE OPTIONS**

The options available to the person in charge of the facility are generally:

1. No search and no evacuation.
2. Search without evacuation.
3. Evacuation without search.
4. Evacuation and search.

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**416.5.2 REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE**

Should the person in charge of the facility request assistance, the Watch Commander shall be notified and will make the decision whether the Department renders assistance and to what level. Should the information and circumstances indicate a reasonably apparent imminent threat to safety, a more active approach, including law enforcement control over the facility, may be considered.

**416.5.3 EVACUATION OR SEARCH ASSISTANCE**

Should the Watch Commander determine that the Department will assist or control a bomb threat incident, the Watch Commander will determine:

1. The level of assistance.
2. The plan for assistance.
3. Whether to evacuate and/or search.
4. The appropriate support necessary.

Considerations regarding the involvement of the facility staff in searching and evacuating are important. A search or evacuation can be difficult without a working familiarity of the facility. The person in charge of the facility should be made aware of the possibility of damage to the facility as a product of a search. The safety of all participants is the paramount concern.

Consideration for additional support resources should include notification and response, or standby notice, for fire, medical and ambulance.

**416.5.4 BOMB THREATS AT A FEDERAL BUILDING OR PROPERTY**

A bomb threat incident at a federal building or property shall be reported to the Federal Protective Service (FPS) (877-437-7411). The FPS will provide a uniformed police response, which may include use of its Explosive Detector Dog Teams.