



SYKESVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Bomb Threats and Searches

General Order 6-26 Effective: 08/25/17

Authorized by: *Michael A. Spaulding* Chief of Police

I. PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this policy to provide officers with a protocol for dealing with threatened bombings to include response, deployment, search, evacuation and assistance to specialized units.

II. POLICY

While many bomb threats are later determined to be hoaxes, they all present particularly serious response requirements for law enforcement agencies. It is the policy of the Sykesville Police Department that all responses to bomb threats or emergencies be conducted systematically, efficiently and in a manner that gives primary consideration to the protection of human life.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Bomb Threat: A bomb threat condition exists when an explosive device has been reported or is suspected to be at a given location.
- B. Bomb Emergency: A bomb emergency exists when a suspected or actual explosive device has been located or has been detonated.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. Communications Responsibilities
 - 1. Communications personnel receiving bomb threats or warnings from callers shall, to the degree possible,
 - a. keep the reporting party on the line;
 - b. identify the location of the device with as much precision as possible and determine when it will be or if it has been detonated;
 - c. determine what type of explosive device is involved;
 - d. attempt to determine:
 - what the device looks like;
 - the type of bomb involved;
 - what will make it detonate, (e.g., radio signal, time delay fuse); and
 - why it was placed.

- e. be alert to:
 - exact wording of the threat;
 - estimate of the sex, race and age of the caller;
 - nature/character of the caller's voice;
 - nature of any background noises; and
 - f. dispatch appropriate field units and other emergency service personnel.
2. Communications personnel receiving reports from individuals or organizations that have received bomb threats shall:
- a. alert the communications OIC;
 - b. determine the location, time of detonation, appearance and any other available information concerning the nature of the threat or the identity of the perpetrators;
 - c. if no explosive device has been identified, ask that the caller alert employees and others to unusual parcels or items on the premises;
 - d. dispatch requisite patrol units and emergency personnel;
 - e. where appropriate, notify other local, state or federal law enforcement agencies; and
 - f. notify a field supervisor to respond if available.
3. Based on the nature of the threat, and if the threat is located within the incorporated limits of town, the OIC will, as required:
- a. immediately dispatch an officer to the scene. In addition, the on-duty supervisor will be notified of the incident;
 - b. Notify local Fire and EMS;
 - c. Contact local HAZMAT units;
 - d. Contact the State Fire Marshal's Office and request explosive canine team(s);

B. Responding Officers' Responsibilities

1. Responding patrol units shall use only walkie-talkies for communication within 300 feet of the location in question. (Some explosive devices may be detonated by stronger radio signals.)
2. If applicable, contact the individual who received the threat to obtain additional information, to include:
 - a. whether previous threats have been received;
 - b. possible motives and/or suspects;
 - c. vulnerabilities of equipment and personnel; and
 - d. exploration of any basic information provided to communications.
3. Notify and provide all relevant information obtained to supervisory officer and maintain information exchange until his or her arrival at the scene.
4. In bomb emergencies, establish and secure a suitable perimeter.

C. Searching for Explosive Devices

1. If an explosive device is alleged to be within a building but has not been located, the OIC will contact building owners/management or other responsible persons to determine if a search of the facility is desired.
2. The decision to search, evacuate or reenter a structure/location during a bomb threat will be the responsibility of the individual in charge of the property.
 - a. The OIC at the scene shall provide information as available to the responsible parties in order to assist them in making decisions on searching, evacuation or reentry.
 - b. If management or the responsible agent does not wish that a search be conducted, no further action of this agency is warranted with the exception of standardized agency reporting requirements.
 - c. Only in cases where a real or suspected explosive device has been detected shall an evacuation be conducted regardless of the desires of building management.
3. Searches of target buildings shall be conducted only with the direct assistance of employees or others knowledgeable of the contents and layout of the building.

- a. The OIC may request the assistance of a bomb detection canine and/or bomb disposal personnel in order to assist in conducting the search.
 - b. A search plan shall be developed identifying the extent of the search depending upon the type of establishment, the motivation of the perpetrator and accessibility of the building.
 - c. A floor plan shall be obtained whenever possible, and a systematic search organized by the OIC.
 - d. In no case shall agency personnel declare that no bomb is present or in any way make the representation that the building is safe to occupy, no matter how thorough the search.
4. When conducting a search without the assistance of bomb disposal personnel, officers should be particularly alert to the following items that may be considered as common indicators that there may be explosives at the location: (Officers should be cautioned that absence of the following does not assure that no bomb is present)
- a. Explosives-related pamphlets, periodicals and books;
 - b. Excessive amounts of galvanized or PVC pipe nipples and end caps, especially if they have drill holes in the nipple or cap;
 - c. Low-explosive powders or other incendiary mixtures;
 - d. Fuses of any type to include homemade burning fuses, such as string soaked in a burning powder;
 - e. Electrical switches; and
 - f. Electrical matches, blasting caps or similar initiators.

D. Located Explosive Devices

1. If a real or suspicious device has been located, or paraphernalia identified (such as noted in item 4 above), officers should:
 - a. not attempt to move or otherwise disturb the device(s),
 - b. use only walkie-talkies for communication within 300 feet of the device(s);

- c. proceed with immediate evacuation of the structure and/or the area to a point consistent with the threat but not less than 300 feet from the device(s);
 - d. define and secure the perimeter;
 - e. notify emergency services personnel; and
 - f. contact communications by telephone and request assistance of the designated bomb disposal unit.
2. The OIC is responsible for command of the scene and briefing of investigators and ordinance specialists as appropriate.
 3. The bomb disposal commander shall have functional authority at any bomb emergency to direct agency personnel in a manner necessary to accomplish its mission in a safe and efficient manner.

E. Post-Explosion Investigation

A designated bomb disposal unit from the Office of the State Fire Marshal shall have the primary responsibility for investigating bombing incidents, to include

1. checking the site for unconsumed explosives or secondary devices;
2. supervising evidence recovery in accordance with agency guidelines;
3. requesting the assistance of other agencies to determine the nature and construction of explosives and the identification of perpetrators;
4. coordination with intelligence operations of this agency, and those of state and federal sources; and
5. assisting in the evaluation of evacuation procedures, area and perimeter security, the availability of emergency services and coordination with the incident commander.

IV. CANCELLATIONS

This General Order cancels and replaces the following policies: General Order 46.1.6, entitled Bomb Emergencies, dated December 21, 2001.