

# Bowie Police Department - General Orders



TITLE: BOMB THREATS		NUMBER: 812
EFFECTIVE DATE: 9/3/12		REVIEW DATE:
_X NEW _ AMENDS _ RESCINDS		DATE:
AUTHORITY <b>Chief John K. Nesky</b>	ACCREDITATIONS STANDARDS 46.1.2	TOTAL PAGES  6

## I. POLICY

The Bowie Police Department will take bomb threats in the City seriously, regardless of the location of the threat. Officers dispatched to a bomb threat will respond safely and quickly in accordance with Departmental procedures. Upon arrival of the first responding Officer(s) the primary concern will be the safety and security of individuals occupying the threatened facility and the safety and security of those in close proximity.

Officers shall not attempt to open or move any suspicious packages.

## II. CHECKLIST

An Officer who receives a bomb complaint shall obtain as much information as possible, including:

- name, location, and phone number of caller
- location and description of the suspected bomb
- how the suspected bomb was discovered
- alleged detonation time, if known

The employee shall caution the caller not to handle the suspected bomb or permit anyone near it.

If the complaint taker speaks directly to the person making the threat, he/she should note the caller's:

- sex
- age
- Speech characteristics (slang, accent, drawl, slur, stutter, etc.)
- other identifying characteristics

The Officer shall also attempt to determine the:

- Location of device
- Time of detonation
- Type of explosive
- Reason for the threat or intended target
- Caller's affiliation with a group or organization

### **III. DEFINITIONS**

Bomb: Any explosive or incendiary device, including blasting caps and military ordnance

Evacuation: The orderly withdrawal of persons from a threatened area to an area of safety

In-Place Sheltering: Having individuals take advantage of available shelter rather than evacuating them

Mail Bomb: Any letter or parcel received by a Department employee who suspects, based on observation, that a package may contain an explosive device

### **IV. FORMS**

Incident Report

Unusual Occurrence Report

### **V. PROCEDURES**

#### **1. Bomb Threats**

##### *Officer's Responsibilities*

When responding to calls for a suspected device, Officers shall cease radio transmissions within a 600 foot radius of the location. Radio transmissions may cause the detonation of many devices.

Upon arrival, the Officer shall assess the situation and evaluate the validity of the threat. Some factors to consider are:

- Details provided by the caller when the threat was made
- The type of place threatened (abortion clinic, laboratory, school)
- The notoriety of the person threatened
- The number of prior false threats received
- Caller's stated affiliation with a group or organization known to carry out bombings
- Current events

If an evacuation is ordered, Officers should:

- Enlist building managers, supervisors, employees, and or security officers to assist in the evacuation
- Notify all persons in the immediate area to evacuate to a safe distance, See: **Explosive Evacuation Distance Matrix** for recommended distances. If evacuating a building, instruct occupants to immediately leave without touching anything to include turning off lights, shutting down computers, or closing windows and doors.
- Establish a perimeter and keep evacuees a safe distance from the building.

At the conclusion of the incident, the Officer shall submit and Incident Report and an Unusual Occurrence Report.

### *Supervisor's Responsibilities*

Supervisors shall evaluate the need to search the location. A search is not mandatory simply because an evacuation has taken place. The person in charge of the premises shall not dictate when a search should be conducted. When determining the need to search, the supervisor shall consider the following:

- Time until alleged detonation
- Size of building or area to be searched
- Validity of threat

When making this determination, the supervisor may consult with the Fire Department's Bomb Squad for guidance. The supervisor should provide the dispatcher with a telephone number that will allow the Fire Department Bomb Squad to contact them directly.

The supervisor may direct that a preliminary search be conducted prior to the arrival of the Fire Department Bomb Squad. If a preliminary search is warranted, it will only be conducted after all persons are evacuated from the premises. Officers shall only search with eyes and ears. Officers shall not move any objects, open any packages, or disturb anything. If a device is found during the search, the Officers shall note the location and immediately leave the area.

If the supervisor feels that the threat is valid and a thorough search must be conducted, the Officer will request that a Prince George's County Fire Department Bomb Technician contact him/her directly. The Bomb Technician may request an Explosive Detection Canine Team to respond to the scene.

Supervisors should ensure that a person familiar with the building is available to meet with the Team prior to the search. After a canine clears the scene the supervisor will notify the person in charge of the premises they may reopen the scene.

No search will be conducted 30 minutes before or until 30minutes after a threatened time of detonation. Supervisors should make the Explosive Detection Canine Team aware of any specific location identified in the threat. If an individual is the target of a threat, areas frequented by that individual shall be searched.

If the validity of the threat is uncertain, the on-scene supervisor may defer the decision to evacuate the premises.

## **2. Notifications**

The Fire Department Bomb Squad will be notified of all bomb threats but may only respond if a device is located, or if a supervisor requests their presence. If a Bomb Technician responds, they will assume command of the scene on arrival. The ranking Officer will assist by coordinating the police effort.

When a bomb is discovered, the following will respond if on duty:

- Shift Supervisor
- Patrol Commander
- Assistant Deputy Chief

Communications will notify the Fire Department Bomb Squad.

## **3. Explosions**

After an explosion, it is imperative that the Officer remains a safe distance from the area. Officers shall keep all individuals away from the blast site, because additional explosions may occur.

## **4. Coordination with Fire Department**

After an explosion, the ranking Fire Official on the scene will direct fire fighting, rescue, and investigative efforts. If a death occurs, primary responsibility for the investigation will transfer to the Prince George's County Homicide Unit.

## **5. Notification to Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms**

The on scene supervisor shall ensure notification is made to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms when any of the following occur:

- A bomb is located
- A bomb is detonated
- When a threat is made against a federal government facility

## **6. Mail Bombs**

Employees whose duties include mail handling should be aware that explosive devices may be sent via U.S. mail or courier.

Although the appearance of mail bombs varies greatly, they may share similar characteristics, such as:

- An overseas postmark
- Cancellation mark different from return address
- Endorsements such as “Fragile-Handle With Care” or “Rush-Do Not Delay”
- Excessive postage
- Fictitious, non-existent or missing return address
- Irregular shape, soft spots or bulges
- Oil stains or discoloration
- Restricted endorsements such as “Personal” or “Private”
- Rigid, uneven or lopsided appearance
- Ticking, buzzing or sloshing sounds
- Unprofessional wrapping, excessive tape or string to secure the parcel

### ***Officer’s Responsibilities***

When confronted with a suspected mail bomb, the Officer will not attempt to open or move the package and shall:

- Notify supervisor
- Notify communications
- Notify all persons in the immediate area to evacuate to a distance of at least 2000 feet. If evacuating a building, instruct occupants to immediately leave without touching anything to include turning off lights, shutting down computers, or closing windows and doors
- If possible, obtain label information from the letter or parcel to include addressee, return address, tracking number and shipper
- Remain available to be interviewed by responding Bomb Squad Technicians

### ***Supervisor’s Responsibilities***

Upon notification, supervisors shall:

- Ensure that the building is evacuated, if the parcel is located within a building
- Ensure that communications is notified
- Provide communications with a telephone number to their location so that the Fire Department Bomb Squad may obtain relevant information directly
- Ensure the reporting employee is available to be interviewed by the Bomb Squad Technician
- Ensure the incident is documented on an Incident Report and Unusual Occurrence Report prior to going off duty

## **Explosive Evacuation Distance Matrix**

<b>Threat</b>	<b>Explosive Mass (TNT Equivalent)</b>	<b>Building Evacuation Distance</b>	<b>Outdoor Evacuation Distance</b>
<b>Pipe Bomb</b>	<b>5lbs</b>	<b>70ft</b>	<b>850ft</b>
<b>Suicide Belt</b>	<b>10lbs</b>	<b>90ft</b>	<b>1,080ft</b>
<b>Suicide Vest</b>	<b>20lbs</b>	<b>110ft</b>	<b>1,360ft</b>
<b>Briefcase/ Suitcase Bomb</b>	<b>50lbs</b>	<b>150ft</b>	<b>1,850ft</b>
<b>Compact Sedan</b>	<b>500lbs</b>	<b>320ft</b>	<b>1,500ft</b>
<b>Sedan</b>	<b>1,000lbs</b>	<b>400ft</b>	<b>1,750ft</b>
<b>Passenger/Cargo Van</b>	<b>4,000lbs</b>	<b>640ft</b>	<b>2,750ft</b>
<b>Small Moving Van/ Delivery Truck</b>	<b>10,000lbs</b>	<b>860ft</b>	<b>3,750ft</b>
<b>Moving Van/ Water Truck</b>	<b>30,000lbs</b>	<b>1,240ft</b>	<b>6,500ft</b>
<b>Semi-trailer</b>	<b>60,000lbs</b>	<b>1,570ft</b>	<b>7,000ft</b>

Source Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA 452) January 2005

Based on the maximum amount of material that could reasonably fit into a container or vehicle. Variations are possible.

Governed by the ability of an un-reinforced building to withstand sever damage or collapse.

Governed by the greater fragment throw distance or glass breakage/falling glass hazard distance. Note that the pipe bomb, suicide belt/vest and briefcase/suitcase bomb are assumed to have a fragmentation characteristic that requires greater standoff distances than an equal amount of explosives in a vehicle.