I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

This paper was designed to accompany the Considerations Document on Bomb Threats and Response developed by the IACP Law Enforcement Policy Center. This paper provides essential background material and supporting documentation to provide greater understanding of the developmental philosophy and implementation requirements for the Considerations Document. This material will be of value to law enforcement executives in their efforts to develop their own policies that meet the requirements and circumstances of their communities and their law enforcement agencies.

B. BACKGROUND

The use of explosives by terrorists and other criminals against targets remains a significant threat to the security of the public and a major consideration for law enforcement agencies. Although federal agencies are often involved in the investigation of bombings, bomb threat assessment and response planning are significant to local law enforcement agencies, since local law enforcement officers will almost always be the first responders in these situations. Even a seemingly minor error in procedure or judgment can result in tragedy. Thus, bomb threat response should be a matter of primary concern to all local law enforcement agencies.

C. “BOMB THREAT” VERSUS “DEVICE LOCATED”

A bomb threat exists when an explosive device has been reported or is suspected to be at a given location. But not all bomb incidents are preceded by a warning; a “device located” event exists when a suspected or actual explosive device has been located either prior to or after detonation. The agency’s bomb response plan must provide detailed guidance in the case of a threat and in the case of a device location and/or detonation without warning.

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

A. BOMB THREAT RESPONSE PLAN

Preparation is the key to effective bomb threat response. Proper planning and thorough training are vital. Every member of a law enforcement agency must know in advance what steps to take when a bomb threat is received. Therefore, local law enforcement agencies must develop comprehensive bomb threat response plans. The plan should be incorporated into a written agency policy that provides detailed guidance for each member of the agency who may be involved in a bomb threat response.

Because correct bomb threat response is a multifaceted and extremely complex procedure, many considerations must be addressed in such policies. At a minimum, each agency’s bomb threat response plan should include the following matters:

- Pre-planning, including applicable memorandums of understanding with other agencies
- Receipt of the bomb threat
- Threat assessment
- Initial response and notifications
Deployment to the scene and initial on-scene actions
- Search of the target premises
- Evacuation of the target premises
- Post-detonation or device located actions
- Complete and thorough investigation of the threat, specifically when it is made through social media

Pre-planning. Agency policy should include guidance for preparing for a bomb incident prior to receiving a threat or locating a potential explosive device. This preparation could include identifying and coordinating with potential stakeholders as well as threat targets.

Potential Stakeholders. Bomb threat and explosive device located incidents necessarily involve coordination with a variety of stakeholders, to include other local, municipal, state, provincial, and/or federal agencies.\(^1\) In addition, response plans might include cooperative agreements between law enforcement and emergency services agencies, such as authorized fire and rescue units, the local office of emergency management, HAZMAT teams, public utilities, such as electric and gas companies, and other support organizations, such as disaster relief or social services entities. In certain situations, environmental protection agencies and other concerned organizations may need to respond to the scene. Additional stakeholders that should be considered include local emergency medical facilities, authorized bomb squad units, canine teams, the chief executive officer or designated command officer, cyber and/or communications technology investigative specialists, fusion center personnel, and criminal investigations personnel. When developing a policy, agencies should consider establishing guidelines for working with these various entities in the event of an incident. As part of this policy discussion, roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder should be clearly established. This may include discussions regarding what information will be released regarding the incident, to whom, and by whom. This role may be designated to the law enforcement agency’s public information officer (PIO).

Involvement of multiple stakeholders can present a major challenge in terms of establishing command, maintaining communications, and ensuring proper division of responsibility. By coordinating with potential stakeholders prior to an incident to establish shared procedures and to develop multiagency training protocols, agencies can develop effective working relationships between the various entities. Planning, good liaison, and respect for the capabilities and responsibilities of the agencies on the scene will contribute to the achievement of a coordinated and effective joint effort to bring the incident to a favorable conclusion.

Threat Targets. A comprehensive bomb response policy should also provide guidelines for identifying and establishing communication with potential bomb attack targets prior to an incident. Most localities have a wide variety of threat targets, to include places of worship; manufacturing plants; large office buildings; shopping malls; schools; military facilities; municipal buildings; electric power plants or substations; mass transit locations, such as airport, train, or bus stations; prominent individuals; or even the law enforcement agency itself.

A bomb threat may be made directly to a law enforcement agency, or may be made to other entities, such as the owner or operator of the target premises or the news media. Agencies should reach out to potential targets to provide guidance on what to do if they receive a threat or locate a device, such as what information to collect, what actions to take, and the agency policy and procedures.

B. RECEIPT OF A BOMB THREAT

Communications Medium Used to Convey the Threat. With advancements in technology, the number of available methods for communicating a bomb threat has increased. While previously limited almost exclusively to the telephone or written methods, bomb threats can now be conveyed through voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) and other digital means, such as social media or email. The procedures to be followed when receiving a threat via each of these communications methods will vary.

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\(^1\) For the purposes of this document, **stakeholders** refers to the individuals and entities who are responsible for the direct response to a bomb threat.
Via Real-Time Voice Communications\(^2\)

Directly from Perpetrator:\(^3\) A checklist of the actions to be taken when receiving a bomb threat should be in the possession of, or easily accessible to, all agency employees. This checklist should include that the caller be kept on the line as long as possible to facilitate tracing and asked

- to identify themselves, and to state of what organization, if any, they are a member;
- who placed the device;
- where they are calling from (Note that the caller may be unwilling to give all or any of this information, but some callers may reveal the requested details; therefore the attempt should be made.);
- to identify the location of the explosive device as precisely as possible; whether the device has already been detonated; and, if not, when or under what conditions or circumstances it will be detonated;
- to indicate the type of explosive device in as much detail as possible, which may include the type of explosive used, quantity of explosive, and similar information;
- to describe the appearance of the device, such as its size, shape, or the nature of the container in which it is located and, if possible, the manner of detonation of the device should be determined, such as detonation by time delay, radio signal, or other means; and
- to discuss the motive for placement of the device, where possible and as time permits. In addition to keeping the caller on the line longer, this information may assist in identifying and subsequently apprehending them and may be critical evidence in subsequent legal proceedings.

Also, for purposes of identification, the individual receiving the threat should be alert to such matters as

- the exact wording of the threat;
- estimated traits of the caller, to include gender and age;
- the tone and character of the caller’s voice, including any accent;
- any emotions displayed (for example, does the caller’s voice indicate fear, anger, uncertainty); and
- background noises that may be helpful in pinpointing the point of origin of the call (such as traffic, music, other voices, or the sound of machinery).

From a Reporting Party:\(^4\) When the initial threat has been received by a person or entity other than law enforcement and the threat is then being relayed to law enforcement, the procedure to be followed by personnel taking the report will be somewhat different. However, some of the information to be sought will be the same.

A separate checklist can be provided for these situations.\(^5\) The identity, address, telephone number, and other appropriate information regarding the reporting party and the reporting party’s organization should be included in this checklist.

The reporting party should be asked to provide any information that will help to establish the source of the threat and the identity of the person making it, as well as information regarding who placed the device and what will cause it to detonate. Any details given by the original caller regarding the nature of the device, its location, its appearance, and the time of its detonation should be developed. Particular attention should be paid to any statements made regarding the target of the attack, since this may be different from the reporting party’s location.

If an actual or suspected device has already been located by the reporting party, full information about the appearance, location, and nature of the device should be obtained, and the reporting party should be instructed to leave the device undisturbed until law enforcement and other emergency personnel arrive.

\(^2\) Real-time voice communications include telephone and VoIP.

\(^3\) While the following steps should be taken by communications personnel when the threat is received, the steps outlined apply equally to any member of the agency who receives a bomb threat.

\(^4\) Note: In the following discussion, the term “reporting party” is used to describe a person who is calling to advise the agency that a bomb threat has been received, or that a possible explosive device has been discovered. The term “original caller” is used to describe the individual who made the initial threat.

If it appears that no actual or suspected device has been located, the reporting party should be instructed to advise others to be alert to the presence of unusual parcels or other items on the threatened premises. However, caution must be exercised in giving such advice to a reporting party, as it may induce untrained persons to institute a search for the explosive device, which may result in premature detonation of the device and unnecessary casualties. Agencies should address the larger issue of when and under what circumstances the search for the alleged device will be conducted by employees, other individuals at the threatened location, law enforcement, or other trained professionals. Agency policy in this area will dictate what instructions should be given by law enforcement to the reporting party at this point.

As soon as possible after receiving the threat, whether directly from the perpetrator or from a reporting party, the appropriate actions should be taken to alert the officer in charge (OIC), supervisors, and command personnel; dispatch field units and emergency services personnel to the scene; notify other agencies; and take other actions as necessary.

**Written Threats.** If a letter or other written threat is received directly by law enforcement personnel, immediate steps should be taken to protect the evidentiary value of the document as outlined by the agency’s policy on evidence collection. These precautions will help preserve fingerprints and other evidentiary aspects of the document. The identity of any employee or other person who handled the document should be recorded for future reference. Not only the letter itself, but also the envelope, any enclosures, and anything else received with or contained in the envelope should be retained and guarded in the same manner as the actual threatening note.

These precautions are equally applicable if the written threat has been received by some other person or entity and relayed to law enforcement. For example, if law enforcement receives a call from the recipient of a written bomb threat, the reporting party should be instructed to protect the threatening note by placing it in a plastic bag and avoid further handling of the note until it can be turned over to law enforcement.

**Threats Communicated Online.** Social media is a growing source for bomb threats. Law enforcement agencies should be equipped to investigate the social media threat through agency cyber experts or have similar resources in place from another source, such as partner law enforcement agencies or fusion center personnel. In addition to following the steps listed previously, cyber threats should also be investigated, and efforts should be made to track down the specific IP address as soon as possible. This may help to prevent copycat threats that are simply the initial threat copied from one social media site and posted to another social media site. The agency should take steps to gather all information available about the platform or service used to carry the threat message; determine the origin and context of the message; and preserve the evidence by capturing a screenshot and not deleting the message.

C. THREAT ASSESSMENT

Appropriate response to a bomb threat requires some degree of initial evaluation. Because many bomb threats are hoaxes, the credibility of the threat should be evaluated before any action is taken as response measures, such as the initiation of evacuations of the target location, involve considerable disruption. Consequently, full response to every threat that is received may cripple the operation of the target almost as effectively as an explosion. Indeed, that is precisely the intent of some bomb hoax perpetrators.

It is the preferable course of action to treat every threat, however doubtful its validity, as real until the contrary can be established.

Agencies should utilize available information to conduct a threat assessment. This assessment may include identifying roles and responsibilities to avoid gaps and overlaps, categorizing the threat, and identifying vulnerabilities of equipment and personnel. The assessment should also entail creating a mechanism to grade threats, taking into account the

- veracity of the information provided;
- seriousness of potential harm;
- likelihood/seriousness of intent;
- motivation behind the threat; and
- credibility of the threat (e.g., is it real or a hoax).

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6 Conducting a threat assessment is a complex undertaking involving a variety of factors, and appropriate procedures will vary greatly based on available resources. A full discussion of this topic is outside the scope of this document. However, key items are included here for consideration. For more information, see the U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center at https://www.secretservice.gov/protection/ntac/.
In addition, as part of the threat assessment process, agencies should deconflict with information-sharing bodies, such as fusion centers, to identify if similar threats have been received, compare details, and recognize patterns. Moreover, these personnel and agencies are equipped to provide guidance on the validity of the threat.

**D. BOMB THREAT RESPONSE**

When a bomb threat is received, prompt notification of the appropriate personnel and agencies is vital. Based upon the nature of the threat, notifications should be made to the appropriate stakeholders, as previously defined. In addition, depending upon the nature of the threat and local circumstances, an agency may wish to consider adding some or all of the following to its notification list:

- Federal law enforcement agencies
- State, provincial, or other local law enforcement agencies
- Security and maintenance personnel of target locations
- Military explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams

**Deployment to the Scene and Initial Actions.** If a threat assessment has been completed and a response to the bomb threat is indicated, officers should be deployed to the location. Based on the individual situation and complexity of the event, agency command personnel should consider doing the following:

- Make the notifications listed in the preceding section of this discussion, and/or ensure that such notifications have in fact been made.
- Dispatch appropriate units to the target area.
- Establish incident command.
- Establish a command post (CP) at a safe distance from the target. Included in this step is a requirement to search the area in and around the proposed CP location for secondary devices and other threats. The use of secondary devices to target first responders and investigators is a critical danger to public safety personnel. This search should be conducted by personnel with appropriate training to recognize devices or suspicious packages.
- Establish and maintain radio, telephone, and other communications among agency headquarters, the CP, law enforcement personnel entering the target area and premises, and other agencies’ command and field personnel.
- Summon such additional personnel or specialized units as may be required by the circumstances and develop unified command.
- Ensure proper briefing of all personnel, including personnel of other responding agencies.
- Perform other command functions as required by the circumstances.

The responsibilities of field personnel responding to the scene of a bomb threat will vary with the situation. Responding officers should begin by confirming information obtained by communication personnel. In addition, where appropriate, they should work to develop additional information regarding the incident through contact with other individuals, such as employees and/or managerial personnel, of the target premises. Additional information might include such matters as whether previous threats have been received, whether possible motives and/or suspects can be identified, and whether specific vulnerabilities of target area equipment, facilities, and personnel can be identified. Specific targets may have special features that make them particularly vulnerable to a bomb attack. For example, if the target premises contain delicate equipment or hazardous materials, or if (as in the case of a jail, hospital, and nursing homes) persons on the premises are unable to remove themselves from the location in a normal fashion, this information should be obtained and passed on to command personnel without delay.

If an actual or suspected explosive device is located, officers should establish and secure a suitable perimeter around the device’s location. When located, a radius of 300 feet from the location of the device is considered minimal. This minimum distance is predicated upon the estimated radius within which radio transmissions may accidentally detonate certain types of explosive devices.

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7 In the United States, this may include the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).
Whether or not a device has been located, officers should use caution when using technological or communication devices, such as, but not limited to radios, in-car computers, body-worn cameras, and cellular telephones, within 300 feet of the target area. Evacuation and perimeter size should be determined by the bomb squad OIC.

In addition to the specific steps listed above, first responders should also take other action as directed by command personnel or dictated by the circumstances of the incident. Because of the great variety of situations that may be encountered, officers must be prepared to react with flexibility. While individual agency policies may be more detailed, they should not be so restrictive as to prevent responding officers from exercising the flexibility and initiative that may be required in an emergency.

**Search, Evacuation, and Reentry Decisions.** When a bomb threat is received, or an actual or suspected explosive device is discovered, decisions must be made regarding whether to initiate a search of the target premises, whether to evacuate the premises, and when to allow reentry of the premises following an evacuation.

While these decisions will ultimately depend on the actual circumstances of the particular incident, certain guidelines should be followed. If a bomb threat is received, the owners, operators, managers, or other responsible persons of the threatened building, herein referred to as building management, should be contacted and asked whether they elect to conduct a search of the premises. As long as no device has been discovered, the decision as to search and/or evacuate the building, and when individuals may reenter the building, is the responsibility of building management. Information, including results of the threat assessment, should be provided to building management to assist them in making the decisions regarding search, evacuation, and reentry.

A written or other permanent record should be made reflecting that building management was provided with the information. The date, time, and location at which the delivery of this information occurred, the details of the information provided, the identity of the law enforcement officials conducting the briefing, and the names of any persons who were witnesses to the briefing should be made a matter of record. Building management should be encouraged to carefully consider evacuation, especially when the decision is to be based upon a bomb threat only.

When building management is asked to make search, evacuation, and/or reentry decisions, they may ask law enforcement officials for advice. Whether or not agency officials will give this advice when asked will depend upon the established policy of the agency. In establishing policy on this point, the agency should keep in mind that both giving bad advice, as well as refusing to give any advice at all may expose the agency to liability. In view of this fact, the agency may conclude that it is better to provide maximum support to building management by advising them as to the desirability of the various alternatives, thus enabling them to make the best possible decision, rather than declining to give advice and allowing nonprofessionals to make an unaided decision that may endanger hundreds or even thousands of lives. While either course may involve some risk of liability, the agency may feel that it is morally (and perhaps legally) preferable to assist in the decision-making process than to leave life-and-death decisions in the hands of nonprofessionals.

When a bomb threat has been received, there are three basic alternatives from which decision makers may choose: (1) take no action at all, (2) evacuate the premises immediately, or (3) search the premises and evacuate only if the results of the search or other developments warrant. The U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) suggests that when a bomb threat has been received, but no device has yet been discovered, the most desirable alternative is to initiate a search of the premises without first ordering an evacuation. Then, if a suspicious object is discovered during the search, an evacuation may be ordered. The search/evacuation/reentry decision is a matter solely for building management only when a threat has been received, but no device has been discovered. If a device is discovered, an immediate evacuation should be ordered, regardless of the wishes of building management.

As previously noted, a search may be conducted without a prior evacuation of the target premises. Although this is often the recommended course of action, the presence of individuals within the location during the search may complicate the search and increase the number of potential casualties if a device detonates during the search. These considerations must be factored into the evacuation decision.

The primary advantage of postponing the evacuation is that it minimizes the disruption to the operations of the target location. In addition, if individuals are still present in the search area, they may be able to provide useful information to the searchers, for example, where spaces are located in which an explosive device could be hidden, and whether a suspicious item, such as a parcel found on a shelf, belongs in the area where it is discovered.

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8 Department of the Treasury Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF P 75550.2) Bomb & Physical Security Planning, [https://www.emergencydispatch.org/articles/bombsecurityplanning.html](https://www.emergencydispatch.org/articles/bombsecurityplanning.html).
Although in the case of an unsubstantiated bomb threat, a search may be initiated without an evacuation of the target premises, once an explosive device is discovered an evacuation must be initiated. Ideally, building management should make this decision. If they do not, it may be necessary in the interests of public safety for law enforcement to order an evacuation. Only in cases where a real or suspected explosive device has been detected should an evacuation be conducted against the desires of building management.

**Bomb Search.** Following receipt of a bomb threat, the search of the targeted premises for explosive devices must be conducted with great care. Where possible, such searches should be conducted by personnel trained in proper search techniques. Whenever possible, an explosive detection canine should be requested to assist in search operations.

The search should be conducted with the assistance of security or maintenance personnel employed in the building or others who know the layout and contents of the building to be searched. These individuals often possess master keys or access cards to secure areas. Wherever possible, a floor plan of the building should be obtained and should be employed in planning and executing the search.

Prior to commencement of the search, a search plan should be developed. The exact nature of the plan will depend upon the circumstances of the case, including the type of location and the probable nature of the device being sought. All personnel involved in the search should be briefed thoroughly regarding the plan to be followed.

Unless other information or circumstances dictate, bomb threat searches should be conducted simultaneously from the outside and inside. This search of the interior should begin at the lowest level of the building—ground floor or basement(s), if any—and progress upward toward the top floors. Areas of the building and grounds to which the public has access should be given priority. This approach also generally applies to the search of individual rooms or areas within the building. Searchers should begin by searching along the walls of the room, then work their way in toward the center. In addition, the search should be divided into four sub-searches: the first sub-search concentrating on the space from the floor to waist height, the second from waist height to eye-level, the third from eye-level to ceiling. Where a suspended ceiling or access panels to in-ceiling spaces exist, the fourth sub-search is conducted in these above-ceiling spaces.

Untrained personnel should be briefed on the search techniques to be used and what to look for while searching. Explosive devices, particularly handmade ones, do not necessarily look like the popular conception of a “bomb.” These individuals should be briefed on this point and alerted to any information that might indicate what appears as unusual or out of place for that particular environment. Once again, the utilization of explosive detection canines for suspicious package determination and search operations cannot be overemphasized.

In many instances, the possible presence of an explosive device may be signaled by the fact that a parcel or other object discovered in the room is of unknown origin or ownership. Where available, persons familiar with the area being searched may be consulted to determine if any suspicious items are present.

In some instances, the discovery of bomb-related paraphernalia may signal the presence of an explosive device. This is more often the case in locations where bombs or incendiary devices are being or have been made. The following items are indicative of such activity:

- Explosives-related literature
- Galvanized or PVC pipe and end caps, especially if the pipes or caps have holes drilled in them
- Explosive powders or incendiary mixtures
- Fuses, including homemade fuses such as string covered in a flammable powder
- Electrical switches
- Blasting caps, electric matches, or similar items
- Pressure vessels, such as pressure cookers

In addition, the presence of timing devices, short lengths of pipe, loose pieces of electrical wire, tools such as wire-cutters or electrical pliers, or other items that may be used as bomb components should be noted. Even the presence of small scraps of wire may indicate that an explosive device is present or has been prepared in that location.

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9 Because of the highly complex and technical nature of such searches, no attempt will be made in this paper to deal in detail with the techniques involved. The following discussion is for general information purposes only and is not meant to serve as a complete training module, exhaustive list of actions that should be taken, or as a substitute for practical training exercises and classroom instruction.
If a device is located during the search, action should be taken in accordance with agency policies and current explosives handling procedures. If the premises were not evacuated prior to the initiation of the search, an evacuation must be ordered once a device is found.

Appropriate personnel and entities should be advised if no device is found. However, just because a search does not locate a device does not necessarily mean that a device is not present. Therefore, agency personnel should be cautioned in how they phrase their response to ensure no promises of absolute safety are made.

If search results are negative, agencies should consider conducting further searches and taking such additional precautions as are feasible to protect the safety of persons on the premises and the public generally in case a device has been overlooked.

E. EXPLOSIVE DEVICE RESPONSE

If either before or during a search an actual or suspected explosive device is discovered, or if any of the paraphernalia described previously are found, certain precautions must be taken until bomb squad personnel can be summoned to the scene.

*The device should not be disturbed.* Untrained personnel should not attempt to remove the device or disturb it in any way. Therefore, any suspicious item should be subjected to visual inspection only until trained personnel arrive.

*Radio transmissions should be eliminated or limited.* Because many explosive devices may be detonated by the electrical energy generated by radio transmissions, including mobile data terminals (MDTs), no radios other than walkie-talkies should be used within 300 feet of the device’s location. In many instances, landline telephones or intercom systems may be available in the vicinity where the device has been discovered, and these should be utilized to reduce the necessity for radio traffic and maintain better communication between command personnel and units on the scene.

*The premises should be evacuated.* The building or area should be evacuated. Individuals should be moved to a safe location no less than 300 feet from the device, preferably to a site that provides shelter from the weather and has been cleared as safe. If the building has multiple stories and a total evacuation of the building is not ordered, at a minimum the floors immediately above and below the floor upon which the device is found should be evacuated.

*A perimeter should be established.* A perimeter around the location should be defined, established, and maintained. A 300-foot perimeter is considered minimum.

*Appropriate personnel, units, and agencies should be notified.* Appropriate stakeholders, to include command personnel and emergency services units such as fire and rescue should be notified of the discovery of the device. If explosive ordnance disposal units have not already been summoned, their assistance should be requested immediately.

In any situation involving a bomb threat or an explosive device located, agency policy should outline who is responsible for overall command and control of the scene, such as the officer-in-charge (OIC). However, policy may dictate that, when an explosive device has been located, the commander of the bomb squad unit (if such a unit is present) should have the authority to direct all agency personnel as necessary to accomplish the bomb squad unit’s mission in a safe and efficient manner.

F. POST-EXPLOSION ACTIONS

If an explosion occurs, the proper emergency services should be summoned, and full cooperation and support should be given to the fire, medical, and other emergency personnel who respond. In addition, to the extent consistent with the performance of emergency services, the scene of the detonation should be isolated and preserved as in the case of any major crime.

Whether or not an explosion occurs, bomb threats require thorough investigation. The responsibility for investigative activities should be clearly established by policy and by command decision. Investigations should be conducted in accordance with established investigative procedures. Physical evidence plays a major part in most incidents involving explosive devices, and the collection, handling, and preservation of this type of evidence should be accomplished by trained personnel.

Agency policy should establish who has the primary responsibility for the post-explosion investigation, such as the designated bomb squad unit. This responsibility should include the following:

*Checking the site for unconsumed explosives or additional explosive devices.* More than one device may have been planted, and it should not be assumed that an explosion already having occurred means that there is no further threat of explosions.
Supervising recovery and preservation of evidence. The collection and preservation of explosives evidence require specialized training that many officers, including even the agency’s crime scene specialists, might not have. Thus, personnel who have been specifically trained in the recovery and handling of explosives evidence should be responsible for this phase of the case.

Requesting assistance of other agencies in collecting and analyzing the evidence. Because of the unique nature of explosives investigations, the assistance of personnel and agencies that specialize in such cases should be sought or, if offered, should be welcomed. Crime laboratories may also be called upon to analyze any evidence recovered. Qualified personnel can frequently determine a great deal from even the smallest traces left by the explosion, such as the type of explosive used, the nature and manner of construction of the explosive device, and even in some cases the specific identity of the perpetrator(s).

Coordinating and sharing intelligence with other agencies. Individuals who employ explosives may commit a series of bombings. These repeated acts often reveal a distinct pattern. Agency explosives investigators should coordinate with other concerned agencies, sharing all available information regarding methods of operation and any other data that may assist in anticipating future attacks and apprehending the perpetrators.

Following any bombing incident, the agency’s performance in handling the emergency must be reviewed and evaluated. This responsibility usually falls on the agency’s bomb squad unit. But since the performance of the bomb squad unit is normally one of the elements to be evaluated, an agency may wish to designate some other official to conduct the evaluation and recommend how the handling of future incidents may be improved.

G. TRAINING

Bomb threat search and response training is vital to prepare agency personnel to respond properly when these incidents occur. Therefore, training specifically related to this type of case must be an established part of the agency training curriculum. This training should not be confined to bomb squad personnel or those designated to serve as OIC in bomb incidents. Since chance may dictate that any member of the agency could be involved in a bomb incident, every officer should receive instruction in the proper method of handling such matters.

Additionally, agencies should consider implementing specialized training for

- communications personnel;
- supervisors;
- bomb squad personnel; and
- community members, especially those who are associated with identified threat targets.

III. CONCLUSION

The best way to handle a bomb incident is to prevent it from occurring. Unfortunately, the prevention of bomb threats or the planting of an explosive device is a matter that is often beyond the control of law enforcement. However, law enforcement agencies can play a role in prevention efforts in several ways, to include the development and sharing of intelligence on potential perpetrators. The agency may also be able to reduce the locality’s vulnerability to bomb threats by providing guidance to those in charge of potential targets regarding the improvement of premises security and the denial of access to target areas to potential bombers.

A comprehensive bomb threat response policy is key. With numerous variables and potential for injury, it is essential to have detailed, written guidelines for each member of the agency. A policy that prepares the agency, potential stakeholders, and threat targets for an incident; directs the actions to be taken during and after a bomb threat; and provides guidance for responding to the scene has the potential to protect an agency and the community it serves from bomb threats.
Every effort has been made to ensure that this document incorporates the most current information and contemporary professional judgment on this issue. Readers outside of the United States should note that, while this document promotes procedures reflective of a democratic society, its legal basis follows United States Supreme Court rulings and other federal laws and statutes.

Law enforcement administrators should be cautioned that each law enforcement agency operates in a unique environment of court rulings, state laws, local ordinances, regulations, judicial and administrative decisions and collective bargaining agreements that must be considered, and should therefore consult its legal advisor before implementing any policy.

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