

The Bomb Threat Response



Adopted from: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

The Reality of Bombs

- Bombings are very rare. In the last three years, there were only 65 incidents where an actual explosive device was placed in a school (excluding colleges and universities).
- However, from 1993-1997, juveniles were responsible for 34% of the bombings in the United States. In some states, the percentage is as high as 66%. 87% of the devices that juveniles build function, which is 6% higher than the national average of 81% for all bombs placed on a target. Juveniles have built sophisticated devices, some even using high explosives.
- We must investigate and respond to every bomb threat we receive.
- To respond properly and consistently, we have created a bomb threat response plan. This presentation will explain our plan.

The Reality of Bombs

- Even though bomb threats may be frightening, we must remain calm and professional. Our first priority is to safeguard students and staff. We must stick to the protocol to ensure that panic does not occur.
- We must also take measures to prevent bomb threats.

Penalties for False Bomb Threats

- Making a false bomb threat is a federal offense punishable under United States Code 18-844e, with a penalty of up to ten years in prison, \$250,000 fine, or both. This penalty also applies to juvenile offenders.
- Making a hoax bomb is also a violation of the Texas Penal Code.

University and College Policy

- Are you familiar with your institution's specific penalties and sanctions if a student or staff member is caught making a false bomb threat?
- Are you familiar with your building's evacuation procedures and evacuation locations?

Prevention

- To combat bomb threats, we have implemented a two-part prevention initiative:
 - Improve the physical security of the school
 - Improve relations between students, faculty, and administration.
- It is especially important that we listen to students and make students feel comfortable coming forward with information.

Prevention: Suspicious Items

- As part of our incident prevention effort, all staff must be alert for suspicious items.
- School staff know what belongs in the buildings and what does not. If you see an item that you feel does not belong or makes you suspicious in any way:
 - DO NOT TOUCH IT.
 - If possible, secure the area (such as locking the door to the room where the item is).
 - Notify the Site Decision Maker.

Prevention: Suspicious Packages

- Many bombs are mailed to the target. All staff who receive mail should be aware of the possible signs of a suspicious package. The presence of a few or many of these items should activate the suspicious item protocol.
 - Foreign postmark, airmail, or special delivery markings.
 - Postage irregularities, including excessive postage, no postage, or unusual stamps.
 - Return address irregularities, including no return address, a return address that does not match the postmark, or a return address that is not familiar to the person the package is addressed to
 - Delivery address irregularities, including a title with no name, the wrong title with a name,
 - Badly typed or poorly written addresses
 - Misspelled words
 - Restrictive markings or special handling instructions, such as "Personal," "Confidential," "Special Delivery," "Open By Addressee Only"

Prevention: Suspicious Packages

- Suspicious package indicators (continued)
 - Visual distractions on the package such as drawings, statements, or handmade postage
 - A rigid or bulky envelope
 - An oddly shaped, unevenly-weighted, lopsided, or lumpy package
 - A strange odor coming from the package
 - Oily stains or discoloration on the package
 - Protruding wires or tinfoil
 - Over-wrapping with excessive securing material such as tape or string
 - A package that is not expected by the addressee
 - A package left by unknown person

Prevention: Suspicious Packages

- Although the presence of one of these conditions does not mean, for certain, that there is a bomb in the package, check further if any of these indicators are present. Find out if the recipient is expecting the package, recognizes the return address, and if the package is the right size for the item expected. Verify the return address. If any of these items come up a "no," investigate further and alert police.
- Most importantly, **DO NOT OPEN ANY SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES**. Many mail bombs are triggered by the act of opening the box or envelope. Leave the package where it is, evacuate the area, and call the bomb squad.

Facilities Review

In cooperation with emergency services, you should conduct a review of your facilities and implement additional physical security measures where deemed appropriate.

Searching Own Areas

- If a search is called for, you should have a communication method or code established.
- This will be your notification to check your own area for suspicious items. Visually sweep your room, looking for out-of-place items. If you find anything out of the ordinary, take the following steps.

If There is an Explosion

- Administration should call 911, Fire, and Police.
- Take cover. Remain where you are unless you are in immediate danger. If you are in immediate danger, get quickly to the nearest safe location.
- Notify the Office via immediately if someone you are with is injured or if you are injured. Also notify the office if you have any information about the explosion or what might have caused it.
- If possible and you are trained, render emergency assistance to injured persons in the area.
- Administration should communicate instructions to staff as quickly as possible.
- Custodial staff should shut off gas and electricity to the building if it can be done safely.
- Administration should assess what exploded, where, and what injuries were caused. They should determine evacuation course of action and communicate with first responders.
- As quickly as possible, EMS will treat injuries.
- If the decision is made to evacuate, you should receive evacuation instructions.

Follow-Up

- Your school should provide support services for staff and students after a bomb threat.
- Your school should also properly reports each bomb threat to law enforcement and to the district.

Thank You

Understanding and following procedures will be extremely important in an emergency where emotions may be running high.

For more information visit: <http://www.atf.treas.gov>