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## Response to Bomb Calls

### 404.1 COMMUNICATION, RESPONSE AND NOTIFICATION

**Agency Content**

E911 Communications, upon receiving a complaint regarding an explosive device, bomb threat, explosion or the discovery of explosive materials, will record all pertinent information regarding the incident and shall dispatch an officer and a supervisor to the scene immediately.

- (a) The dispatcher may inform responding units to call the E911 Communications by telephone to receive the call if there are extenuating circumstances.

The supervisor, after determining the facts regarding a bomb threat, an explosion that has or may occur, or upon the discovery of suspicious apparatus that may be an explosive device, shall notify a superior officer.

The superior officer shall notify the Platoon Commander, Uniform Bureau Chief, or in his/her absence, the Duty Chief, and the Chief of Police, regarding the incident, and shall provide any additional information as it becomes available.

A Platoon Commander, Uniform Bureau Chief or Duty Chief are authorized to activate the Hazardous Devices Unit.

The Department shall maintain a list of Hazardous Devices Unit personnel, which is located within CNYLEADS on the Syracuse Police Information page under notifications lists. These personnel are equipped with pagers and can be contacted at any time by E911 Communications.

In the event that no Syracuse Police Department Members of the Hazardous Devices Unit are available, the assistance of outside Law Enforcement Explosives Ordinance Disposal Team(s) shall be requested pursuant to established mutual aid agreements (E.g., Onondaga County Sheriff's Department (OCSD), New York State Police (NYSP)).

### 404.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF INITIAL OFFICERS

**Agency Content**

When dispatched to a complaint of a bomb threat, officers shall proceed to the scene without delay. Many bomb threats are false reports initiated to create excitement or disruption. The attention drawn by the arrival of emergency vehicles may stimulate repeated bomb threat calls. Therefore, the approach of police vehicles should be as unobtrusive as possible and appropriate radio codes employed.

Officers shall interview the person who received the threat and attempt to obtain the following information:

- (a) Time the threat was received.
- (b) How the threat was transmitted (telephone, letter, etc.).
- (c) Time the bomb is scheduled to detonate.
- (d) Location of the bomb.

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- (e) If a specific target was designated.
- (f) If any reason for the threat was given.
- (g) If the threat was recorded.
- (h) Did the threat indicate specific knowledge concerning the type of business conducted or the physical layout of the building.
- (i) Sex, race, age and accent of the caller.
- (j) Background noises (traffic, music, laughter, etc.).
- (k) Did the threat indicate technical knowledge regarding explosives.
- (l) Is the business engaged in a controversial function or manufacturing a controversial product.
- (m) Have similar businesses been targets of bombings.
- (n) Has the building been subjected to acts of malicious damage or destruction.

Whenever possible, officers should communicate without using the radio to avoid the:

- (a) Possible detonation of a bomb.
- (b) Possibility of a crowd gathering at the scene.

#### **404.3 SEARCHING FOR EXPLOSIVE DEVICES**

##### **Agency Content**

Searches for explosive devices are the responsibility of the owner, manager, principal of the building. Officers shall recommend that a thorough search of the exterior and interior be conducted. Officers may, when necessary, assist in the search.

- (a) Prior to conducting the search, the ranking officer present will assess whether officers participating in the search turn off portable radios or remain in communication. Turning off radios may minimize the possibility of radio transmissions causing certain types of explosive devices to detonate.

Search teams should be comprised of responsible employees familiar with the area to be searched. The size of the search team should be kept to a minimum. When organizing a search team, consideration should be given to the:

- (a) Size of the area to be searched.
- (b) Time available for the search.
- (c) Availability of personnel to conduct the search.

Prior to a search being commenced officers should recommend that:

- (a) Building maintenance personnel assist, as they are familiar with the building and possess master keys to all doors and locks.
- (b) Consider the use of police canines for the search.

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- (c) All air conditioning and heating units be turned off while the search is conducted. This will enable the search team to detect any unusual noises.
- (d) Searchers shall be cautioned not to touch or move any unusual objects they locate while conducting the search.
- (e) Searchers are equipped with a flashlight, crayon, piece of chalk or tape, or suitable marking device.

Upon entering a room, searchers should move to various parts of the room, stand quietly and listen for a clock work device. Searchers should divide the room in half with the searchers starting back to back, working around the walls into the center of the room. Searchers should be alert for anything unusual, out of the ordinary or foreign to the location being searched. Searchers should conduct several sweeps of the room as follows:

- (a) First sweep from the floor up, working to waist level.
- (b) Second sweep from the waist to head level.
- (c) Third sweep from the head level to the ceiling.
- (d) Fourth sweep of any false or suspended ceiling.

Once a room has been swept, a mark signifying the room has been searched should be conspicuously placed on the door or door frame to avoid duplication of effort. In a commercial building, business office, factory or similar facility, particular attention should be paid to areas accessible to the public (lobby, rest rooms, corridors, etc). Exterior searches should include anything attached to, or in close proximity to the building (e.g. mailbox utility access, dumpsters, etc).

In the event an actual or suspected explosive device is located, officers shall:

- (a) Secure the scene.
- (b) Request assistance from the Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services.
- (c) Make the appropriate notifications as outlined in the above section Communication, Response and Notification.
- (d) Continue the search of other areas for additional devices.

#### **404.4 EVACUATION OF BUILDINGS**

##### **Agency Content**

**Bomb Threat** - officers shall contact the person in charge of the establishment and recommend evacuation. The decision to evacuate a building subsequent to a bomb threat is the responsibility of the owner, manager, or principal and should be based on an assessment of the threat.

**Explosive Device Discovery** - Upon the discovery of a suspected explosive device, the senior ranking officer on the premises will order an evacuation. In addition, all officers on the premises are to turn off their portable radios and assist in the orderly evacuation of the premise, as directed. Only those officers designated by the senior ranking officer will report to the location designated as the command post, for further instructions.

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- (a) The senior ranking officer on the scene shall follow the procedures described in the Department's policy governing "Critical Incident Management".
- (b) The owner/agent in charge of the premise shall be notified of the discovery and the ordered evacuation.

When an explosive device is discovered, officers shall obtain as much information regarding the device, without touching it, to include:

- (a) Description of the device or package.
- (b) Ownership of the device or package.
- (c) Method by which the item arrived at, or entered the building.
- (d) Names of those persons having any association with the item.

Whenever a decision is made to evacuate a building, officers shall assist in maintaining order during the evacuation. Officers should assist in:

- (a) Removing occupants to a safe area, away from the dangers caused by blast and fragmentation. In order to safeguard bystanders from injury they should be moved to a safe distance from the building during the search and investigation. The distance shall be determined by the ranking officer on the scene and, if available, by Hazardous Devices Unit personnel.
- (b) Securing the entrances to the building to preclude re-entry by unauthorized persons.

Whenever a bomb threat contains a specific time for detonation, officers should exit the target area at least five (5) minutes prior to the deadline.

#### **404.5 DAMAGE CONTROL TECHNIQUES**

##### **Agency Content**

Officers shall not touch, move or tamper with any actual or suspected explosive device or material, or permit any person other than a bomb technician to do so.

Only with the approval of a bomb technician, will officers initiate any damage control measures. Measures such as disconnecting utilities (e.g. natural gas or fuel oil) or removing flammable materials from the area shall not be initiated unless directed to do so by a bomb technician.

#### **404.6 HANDLING AND TRANSPORTATION OF EXPLOSIVE DEVICES**

##### **Agency Content**

Only those personnel assigned to the Hazardous Devices Unit are authorized to handle suspected explosive devices and all personnel are to prevent any unauthorized persons from handling such devices.

For safety considerations, no member of the Department, other than members of the Hazardous Devices Unit, shall transport any suspected bomb, explosive material or device in a police vehicle.

- (a) Specially trained/authorized members of the SWAT Unit's Explosive Breaching Cadre may transport explosive materials which are specific to the SWAT Unit's operations.

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In any situation involving a suspected explosive device where a Hazardous Devices Unit member is unable to respond, the Uniform Bureau Deputy Chief or Duty Chief will make all determinations with respect to the appropriate course of action to be taken.