

Response to Bomb Calls

408.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Best Practice MODIFIED

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to assist members of the Syracuse Police Department in their initial response to incidents involving explosives or explosive devices, explosion/bombing incidents or threats of such incidents. Under no circumstances should these guidelines be interpreted as compromising the safety of first responders or the public. When confronted with an incident involving explosives, safety should always be the primary consideration. Members of the Department shall utilize the services of the Syracuse Police Department's Hazardous Devices Unit, consisting of officers specially trained in the handling of explosive devices and materials, when actual or suspected explosives are encountered.

408.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Agency Content

Commercial Explosive - Explosives and devices that may be legally purchased, including products such as dynamite, blasting caps, explosive slurries and detonating cord.

Military Ordinance - Devices such as bombs, rockets, grenades, artillery or mortar shells of domestic or foreign manufacture.

Improvised Explosive Device - Clandestinely manufactured explosive devices such as pipe bombs and Molotov cocktails.

Ammunition - Undetonated cartridges and projectiles used in firearms.

408.2 POLICY

Best Practice

It is the policy of the Syracuse Police Department to place a higher priority on the safety of persons and the public over damage or destruction to public or private property.

408.3 RECEIPT OF BOMB THREAT

Best Practice MODIFIED

Department members receiving a bomb threat should obtain as much information from the individual as reasonably possible, including the type, placement and alleged detonation time of the device.

If the bomb threat is received on a recorded line, reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that the recording is preserved in accordance with established department evidence procedures.

The member receiving the bomb threat should ensure that a patrol supervisor is immediately advised and informed of the details.

[See procedure for COMMUNICATION, RESPONSE AND NOTIFICATION](#)

[See procedure for RESPONSIBILITIES OF INITIAL OFFICERS](#)

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408.4 GOVERNMENT FACILITY OR PROPERTY

Best Practice

A bomb threat targeting a government facility may require a different response based on the government agency.

408.4.1 SYRACUSE POLICE DEPARTMENT FACILITY

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

If the bomb threat is against the Syracuse Police Department facility, the Patrol Commander will direct and assign officers as required for coordinating a general building search or evacuation of the police department, as he/she deems appropriate.

408.4.2 OTHER COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL FACILITY OR PROPERTY

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

If the bomb threat is against a county or municipal facility within the jurisdiction of the Syracuse Police Department that is not the property of this department, the appropriate agency will be promptly informed of the threat. Assistance to the other entity may be provided as the Patrol Commander deems appropriate.

408.4.3 FEDERAL BUILDING OR PROPERTY

Best Practice

If the bomb threat is against a federal building or property, the Federal Protective Service should be immediately notified. The Federal Protective Service provides a uniformed law enforcement response for most facilities, which may include use of its Explosive Detector Dog teams.

If the bomb threat is against a federal government property where the Federal Protective Service is unable to provide a timely response, the appropriate facility's security or command staff should be notified.

Bomb threats against a military installation should be reported to the military police or other military security responsible for the installation.

408.5 PRIVATE FACILITY OR PROPERTY

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

When a member of this department receives notification of a bomb threat at a location in the City of Syracuse, the member receiving the notification should obtain as much information as reasonably possible from the notifying individual, including:

- (a) The location of the facility.
- (b) The nature of the threat.
- (c) Whether the type and detonation time of the device is known.
- (d) Whether the facility is occupied, and if so, the number of occupants currently on-scene.
- (e) Whether the individual is requesting police assistance at the facility.
- (f) Whether there are any internal facility procedures regarding bomb threats in place, such as:

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1. No evacuation of personnel and no search for a device.
2. Search for a device without evacuation of personnel.
3. Evacuation of personnel without a search for a device.
4. Evacuation of personnel and a search for a device.

The member receiving the bomb threat information should ensure that a patrol supervisor is immediately notified so that he/she can communicate with the person in charge of the threatened facility.

408.5.1 ASSISTANCE

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

The Patrol Commander should be notified when police assistance is requested. The Patrol Commander will make the decision whether the Department will render assistance and at what level. Information and circumstances that indicate a reasonably apparent, imminent threat to the safety of either the facility or the public may require a more active approach, including police control over the facility.

Should the Patrol Commander determine that the Department will assist or control such an incident, he/she will determine:

- (a) The appropriate level of assistance.
- (b) The plan for assistance.
- (c) Whether to evacuate and/or search the facility.
- (d) Whether to involve facility staff in the search or evacuation of the building.
 1. The person in charge of the facility should be made aware of the possibility of damage to the facility as a result of a search.
 2. The safety of all participants is the paramount concern.
- (e) The need for additional resources, including:
 1. Notification and response, or standby notice, for fire and emergency medical services.

Even though a facility does not request police assistance to clear the interior of a building, based upon the circumstances and known threat, officers may be sent to the scene to evacuate other areas that could be affected by the type of threat, or for traffic and pedestrian control.

[See procedure for SEARCHING FOR EXPLOSIVE DEVICES](#)

[See procedure for EVACUATION OF BUILDINGS](#)

408.6 FOUND DEVICE

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

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When handling an incident involving a suspected explosive device, the following guidelines, while not all inclusive, should be followed:

- (a) No known or suspected explosive item should be considered safe regardless of its size or apparent packaging.
- (b) The device should not be touched or moved except by the Hazardous Devices Unit or military explosive ordnance disposal team.
- (c) Personnel should not transmit on any equipment that is capable of producing radio frequency energy within the evacuation area around the suspected device. This includes:
 1. Two-way radios.
 2. Cell phones.
 3. Other personal communication devices.
- (d) The Hazardous Devices Unit or military explosive ordnance disposal team should be summoned for assistance.
- (e) The largest perimeter reasonably possible should initially be established around the device based upon available personnel and the anticipated danger zone.
- (f) A safe access route should be provided for support personnel and equipment.
- (g) Search the area for secondary devices as appropriate and based upon available resources.
- (h) Consider evacuation of buildings and personnel near the device or inside the danger zone and the safest exit route.
- (i) Promptly relay available information to the Patrol Commander including:
 1. The time of discovery.
 2. The exact location of the device.
 3. A full description of the device (e.g., size, shape, markings, construction).
 4. The anticipated danger zone and perimeter.
 5. The areas to be evacuated or cleared.

[See procedure for DAMAGE CONTROL TECHNIQUES](#)

[See procedure for HANDLING AND TRANSPORTATION OF EXPLOSIVE DEVICES](#)

408.6.1 SURRENDER OF EXPLOSIVES AND AMMUNITION

Agency Content

Whenever a citizen surrenders an explosive compound or device, officers shall adhere to the following procedures:

- (a) The type and amount of recovered fireworks will determine the method used to handle and transport them.

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- (b) Officers who recover any significant amount of fireworks will notify their supervisor immediately.
- (c) The supervisor will contact a bomb technician, who shall determine how the materials are to be handled.
- (d) Officers shall complete an incident report and Evidence/Property Submission Form for such items.
- (e) Small quantities of common fireworks must be stored only in the designated steel storage box located at Patrol East, until they can be safely destroyed.
 - 1. Officers will obtain the key for the storage box from the Patrol office at the Patrol East complex.
 - 2. Officers will sign the key out in the fireworks logbook.
 - 3. After securing the fireworks in the storage box, the key will be returned to the Patrol office.
 - 4. A copy of the Evidence/Property Submission Form will be left in the logbook.
- (f) Officers should use particular care when packaging and securing fireworks due to the hazards they present (e.g., fireworks ignited by the heat sealer or detonated from friction due to being forced into a small area).
 - 1. Fireworks should be packaged loosely in the appropriate evidence container or bag.
 - 2. Evidence bags will be sealed using evidence tape. Packaging is not to be secured with a heat sealer.
- (g) The storage box will be checked on a regular basis by Hazardous Devices Unit personnel.
- (h) Hazardous Devices Unit personnel will appropriately dispose of fireworks that are turned into the storage box.
- (i) Under no circumstances shall members attempt to transport, dismantle, clean, render safe or in any manner alter or tamper with any explosive or hazardous devices. Officers shall not transport military ordinance, commercial explosives or improvised explosive devices or allow them into any Department facility or other occupied building. If an item is delivered to the police headquarters, members shall:
 - 1. Instruct the complainant to place the item on the floor.
 - 2. Evacuate all persons from the area.
 - 3. Notify a supervisor, who shall make the appropriate additional notifications.
- (j) Commercial and military explosives shall be handled, transported and stored by Hazardous Devices Unit personnel only, in an appropriate facility approved by the Chief of Police.
 - 1. Specially trained/authorized members of the SWAT Unit's Explosive Breaching Cadre may handle, transport, and store explosive materials which are specific to the SWAT Unit's operations.

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408.7 EXPLOSION/BOMBING INCIDENTS

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

When an explosion has occurred, there are multitudes of considerations which may confront the responding officers. As in other catastrophic events, a rapid response may help to minimize injury to victims, contamination of the scene by gathering crowds, or any additional damage from fires or unstable structures.

Explosives may produce significant physical evidence when detonated. The class of explosive, such as gas or vapor, propellant or high explosive can usually be identified. The specific explosive such as black powder, chlorate mixture, nitroglycerine, or dynamite can occasionally be identified. When investigating an explosion, evidence technicians, with the assistance of a member(s) of the Department who have received Post Blast training, shall:

- (a) Collect and package the remains of containers, wires, burned fuses or possible mechanisms.
- (b) Attempt to locate undetonated explosives as control samples. Undetonated explosives may be extremely unstable, and should only be handled by Hazardous Devices Unit personnel.

408.7.1 CONSIDERATIONS

Best Practice

Officers responding to explosions, whether accidental or a criminal act, should consider the following actions:

- (a) Assess the scope of the incident, including the number of victims and extent of injuries.
- (b) Request additional personnel and resources, as appropriate.
- (c) Assist with first aid.
- (d) Identify and take appropriate precautions to mitigate scene hazards, such as collapsed structures, bloodborne pathogens and hazardous materials.
- (e) Assist with the safe evacuation of victims, if possible.
- (f) Establish an inner perimeter to include entry points and evacuation routes. Search for additional or secondary devices.
- (g) Preserve evidence.
- (h) Establish an outer perimeter and evacuate if necessary.
- (i) Identify witnesses.

408.7.2 NOTIFICATIONS

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

When an explosion has occurred, the following people should be notified as appropriate:

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- Fire department / Emergency Medical Services
- Hazardous Devices Unit
- Additional department personnel, such as investigators and forensic services
- Patrol supervisors
- Patrol Commander
- Deputy Chiefs
- Chief of Police
- Other law enforcement agencies, including local, state or federal agencies, such as the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)
- Other government agencies, as appropriate

408.8 CROWD CONTROL

Best Practice

Only authorized members with a legitimate need should be permitted access to the scene. Spectators and other unauthorized individuals should be restricted to a safe distance as is reasonably practicable given the available resources and personnel.

408.8.1 PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

As in any other crime scene, steps should immediately be taken to preserve the scene. The on scene supervisor should assign officers to protect the crime scene area, which could extend over a long distance. Consideration should be given to the fact that evidence may be embedded in nearby structures or hanging in trees and bushes.