



Lunenburg Police Department

Policy Number: 1.27	Subject: Bomb Threat Response Protocol
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Issuing Authority: <i>Chief Thomas L. Gammel</i>	

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

The purpose of this policy ensure the safety of citizens and Public Safety personnel exposed to bomb threats and explosive devices, and to provide some level of guidance in preparing and responding to Bomb threats. All bomb threats will be treated as credible threats until they are investigated, evaluated and cleared. For more detail, all employees are encouraged to read and become familiar with the Bomb threat response policy.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Lunenburg Police Department to provide a graduated flexible response to bomb threats incidents including but not limited to:

- A. A threat relayed in writing, verbally, by any mode of technology, e.g., land line telephone, cellular telephone, computer or by any other form.
- B. The confirmed presence of an explosive device.
- C. The detonation of an explosive device.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Bomb Emergency:**
 1. A suspected explosive device has been discovered and not detonated.
 2. A bomb has exploded.
- B. **Bomb threat:** An explosive device (bomb) has been reported to exist in a stated location or is suspected to exist at a stated location.
- C. **Command Post:** Physical location where tactical level Incident Commander, Command level staff, and Emergency Resource Response groups will convene.

- D. Unified Command: A structure that syndicates the Incident Commanders of all major public safety organizations and other individuals germane to the incident in order to coordinate an effective response. Members of the Unified Command work together to develop a common set of incident objectives and strategies, share information, and organize and deploy required resources.
- E. Search Control Team: A bomb search team comprised of; Police personnel, Fire personnel, or bomb techs if available, and persons familiar with the building and its contents who can inform you of anything that is out of place or looks suspicious.
- F. Post Incident Review: A post emergency detailed analysis and discussion of events occurring during an incident that will serve to determine a follow up investigation plan; identify evidentiary aspects of incident, coordinate further actions if necessary.
- G. Officer in Charge: The most senior officer in the chain of command having authority over the incident.
- H. Incident Commander: The first arriving supervisor to take charge of the incident. If the incident is a bomb threat or suspected bomb found the incident command will fall under the responsibility of the police department. If a device has actually been detonated the command will become unified.
- I. Triage Area: A safe location formed by the first arriving Incident Commander or the Unified Command for use by Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel to assess patients and render medical treatment for injuries sustained during the event. The triage area should be located at least 900 feet from the incident location.
- J. Public Information Officer (PIO): Liaison to the media. This officer is responsible for directing the media to a safe and secure area. The PIO is also responsible for updating the media as the incident developments. ¹

IV. PROCEDURE [46.1.2]

A. Initial Response Protocol

Bomb threat emergencies will require a response from all available patrol officers, a Patrol Supervisor, the Fire Department, and Emergency Medical Services, (EMS).

1. Confirm that the Patrol Supervisor, EMS and Fire Department are responding to the Bomb Threat Emergency.
2. Officers shall transmit his/her arrival to the scene within 300 feet from the bomb threat location. Radios can be left on at this point to monitor radio traffic. Do not transmit on mobile or portable radios within a 300 foot radius of the bomb threat location. (*Some explosive devices can be detonated by the transmission of radio frequency*).
3. First arriving officers shall, if logically possible:
 - a. Conduct an immediate scene assessment. If a device has been confirmed or an explosion has occurred:
 - i. Consider, anticipate and plan for the detonation of a secondary explosive device.
 - ii. Response should be upgraded, Police, Fire, EMS. Ensure that the FBI, and State Police Fire and Explosion Unit have been notified.

- iii. Move injured parties to a safe location.
- b. Locate the building manager, or in the case of the School District, the School Administrator (*Principal or Vice Principal in his/her absence*).
- c. Order an evacuation if a device has been confirmed.
- d. Locate and conduct a field interview with the individual who received the threat immediately, and attempt to obtain additional information including but not limited to:
 - i. Location of the bomb?
 - ii. Description of the device? *What kind of Bomb is it?*
 - iii. When will the bomb detonate?
 - iv. Possible motives? *Why was the bomb placed?*
 - v. What kind of Device?
 - vi. What will cause the bomb to detonate?
 - vii. Possible Identification and characteristics of the caller or current location?
 - viii. Previous threats received at the location?
- e. If a device has not been confirmed evaluate the credibility of the threat with reported information and consider the following actions:
 - i. Take no action
 - ii. Search without evacuation
 - iii. Initiate a partial evacuation
 - iv. Evacuate and search. ⁱⁱ

NOTE: If available; the property manager or, in the case of a school, the Principal, or in his absence, the Vice Principal shall make the decision as to whether the building should be evacuated as required based upon a threat assessment.

- f. Clear a perimeter around the evacuation area.
- g. Clear the evacuation doors and routes, and Identify secondary evacuation doors and routes. (*Evacuation Doors and routes for the School District will be included in this policy*).
- h. Monitor entrances and exits for unauthorized re-entry into the building.

B. Establishing a Command Post

The Officer in Charge will cooperate in the establishment of a Unified Command. The Unified Command shall direct the response to the incident including but not limited to:

1. Establishing a Command Post. Stage and upwind at least 300 feet from the incident location or 1000 feet if a device is confirmed.
2. Gather actionable intelligence information that can be used to maintain situational awareness for decision making and guide tactical teams.
3. Conducting and initial evaluation of the threat.
4. Evacuation and accountability of all inhabitants of the incident location, or students, faculty, and staff in the case of a school. (*If available the property*

manager or, in the case of a school, the Principal, or in his/her absence, the Vice Principal shall make the decision as to whether the building should be evacuated as required based upon a threat assessment).

5. Stabilizing the scene.
6. Determining the access point or points of the building/dwelling.
7. Searching the building/dwelling and or inhabitants/ employees, or in the case of a school, students, faculty and staff.
8. Identifying, acquiring, and deploying resources if a device is confirmed, e.g. Mutual aid, State Police Bomb Disposal unit, Fire Marshalls Office, Explosive Detection canines, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Local Utility Companies, Unitil, Keyspan, National Grid, Verizon.
9. Establishing a staging area for incoming resources.
10. Forming a triage area.
11. Allocating a separate staging area for Parents/loved ones and media.
12. Designating a Public Information Officer and Liaison Officers to Media and Parents.
13. Planning for sustainment.
14. Declaring when the threat is neutralized, the building/school/facility is safe, and determining re-occupancy.

C. Building Search

The Search of the building shall be conducted for all risk levels. The building shall be searched by a Search Control Team comprised of:

1. Police and Fire personnel,
2. Bomb techs if available, and
3. Persons familiar with the building and its contents, e.g., Security, building maintenance personnel, building managers, Administrators, etc., who can inform you of anything that is out of place or looks suspicious.

D. Search Control Team Responsibilities

1. Confirming that an EMS unit is on stand-by to support the Bomb Search effort;
2. Establishing an evacuation route(s) for personnel conducting the search;
3. Ensuring that Building managers/School Administrators/Janitorial Staff/Occupants familiar with the area/building shall, whenever possible, or safe to do so, assist the search control team;
4. Verifying that all personnel engaged in the Bomb search are instructed to be alert for suspicious persons, parcels, foreign objects, or any other object that appears out of place;
5. Assuring the search includes all potential concealment areas.
6. The search control Team shall:
 - a. Always conduct a search being mindful of possible secondary devices.
 - b. Search the exterior area first with special attention to:
 - i. Unfamiliar motor vehicles (*use extreme caution*)
 - ii. Entrances and Exits

- iii. Window boxes
- iv. Air conditioning units
- v. Flower arrangements
- vi. Trash receptacles
- c. Search common areas first. This will include:
 - i. Hallways
 - ii. Bathrooms
 - iii. Elevators
 - iv. Elevator Shafts
- d. If the incident location is a school the search of common areas will also include:
 - i. Gym
 - ii. Library
 - iii. Cafeteria
- e. Search more controlled areas or areas with restricted public access next. In a school this would include the classrooms.
- f. Search locked and controlled areas such as utility areas and the roof.**NOTE:** Any items noted as being out of place shall be viewed as suspicious.

E. Threat - A Device is Discovered

NOTE: Under no circumstance will untrained personnel tamper with, displace or attempt to move, or dismantle any suspicious object or device.

1. Upgrade response; Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Service (EMS);
2. Refrain from using two way radio communications. The Institute of Makers of Explosives (IME) provides information regarding radio frequency radiation hazards in proximity to detonators (blasting Caps); Devices that may pose a danger in this environment:
 - a. Two way radios
 - b. Cellular phones
 - c. Global Positioning Systems (GPS)
 - d. Remote vehicle entry
 - e. Data acquisition systems
 - f. Garage door openers
 - g. Wireless warehouse stock control systemsⁱⁱⁱ

NOTE: a description of the device, document the location of the device, its proximity to other hazards, e.g. gas lines, electrical service panels, and water mains;

3. Discontinue the search even if a secondary device may be suspected;
4. Evacuate the building/school immediately of all nonessential personnel if evacuation has not already been accomplished. *All personnel should be moved to an area at least 300 feet from the incident location and away from any windows;*

5. The search unit shall evacuate the building;
6. The building/school will be sealed off with crime scene/Police line tape, and all personnel will be restricted with the exception of those who are directly involved in the investigation and/or have been trained in the disarming and disposal of explosive devices;
7. A Bomb Disposal Unit and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, (FBI) will be notified immediately.

F. Post-Incident Protocols

1. No Device/Device found/Detonation, Threat neutralized
 - a. Police investigator(s) now have tactical command for ensuing follow-up investigation and supervening issues related to identifying suspect, evidence and causes.
 - b. All agencies involved in the incident shall conduct a post incident debriefing to share information pertinent to the follow up investigation, discuss the action taken, the outcome of the incident and identify additional training requirements.
 - c. An Officer/Officer's shall provide support for the regression to normalcy, e.g., removal of barriers, traffic control, and orderly re-occupation of the building.
 - d. A critical incident debriefing will be scheduled for events involving a confirmed device, a detonation, or if otherwise requested by any member of any agency or discipline involved in the incident.

NOTE: The incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder is usually eliminated when officers take part in a debriefing with a trained counselor within twenty-four (24) hours of a critical incident.

G. FBI CLASSIFICATION OF THREAT RISK LEVELS

1. Low Level of Threat:

- a. A threat that poses a minimal risk to the victim and public safety.
- b. Threat is vague and indirect.
- c. Information contained within the threat is inconsistent, implausible or lacks detail.
- d. Threat lacks realism.
- e. Content of the threat suggests person is unlikely to carry it out.
- f. Threat is made by young child (less than 9 or 10) and there is laughter in the background.
- g. The caller is definitely known and has called numerous times.

2. Medium Level of Threat:

- a. A threat that could be carried out, although it may not appear entirely realistic.
- b. Threat is more direct and more concrete than a low-level threat.

- c. Wording in the threat suggests that the threatener has given some thought to how the act will be carried out.
- d. There may be a general indication of a possible place and time (though these signs still fall well short of a detailed plan).
- e. There is no strong indication that the threatener has taken preparatory steps, although there may be some veiled reference or ambiguous or inconclusive evidence pointing to that possibility—an allusion to a book or movie that shows the planning of a violent act or a vague, general statement about the availability of weapons.
- f. There may be a specific statement seeking to convey that the threat is not empty: "I'm serious!" or "I really mean this!"

3. High Level of Threat:

- a. A threat that appears to pose an imminent and serious danger to the safety of others.
- b. Threat is direct, specific and plausible. For example, "This is John Smith, I'm fed up with Mr. Jones yelling at me. There's a bomb under his desk."
- c. Threat suggests concrete steps have been taken toward carrying it out, for example, statements indicating that the threatener has acquired or practiced with a weapon or has had the intended victim under surveillance.

ⁱ Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Incident Command Post Procedures.

ⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Justice FBI Bomb Data Center

ⁱⁱⁱ Institute of Makers of Explosives. (2011). *Safety Guide for the Prevention of Radio Frequency Radiation Hazards in the use of Commercial Electric Detonators (Blasting Caps)*.