

Cobb County Police Department

Policy 4.05

BOMB THREATS AND DESTRUCTIVE DEVICES

Effective Date: May 1, 2016
Rescinds: Policy 5.06 “Bomb Threats and Destructive Devices” (January 12, 2013)
Related Orders: Policy 4.01 “Critical Incident Management”
Issued By: Chief J.R. Houser Page 1 of 5
The words “he, his, him,” which may appear in this policy, are used generically for clarity and ease of reading. These terms are not meant to imply gender and relate to all employees of the Department.

The purpose of this policy is to specify the responsibilities of Department employees, initial responding units, and supervisors responding to the scenes of calls which may involve bomb threats and Destructive Devices.

I. POLICY

Bomb threat and Destructive Device situations shall be dealt with on an individual basis. The type and magnitude of police response to the threat shall be based upon reasonable actions commensurate with all facts and evidence available.

II. DEFINITION

Destructive Device: any device or substance that can be made to explode. Examples include, but are not limited to one or both parts of a binary explosive, blasting caps, dynamite, military ordnance, home-made bombs, commercial grade fireworks, etc. Retail fireworks are generally not considered destructive devices.

III. BOMB THREAT PROCEDURES

A. Call Taker

Any employee of the Department may be the recipient of a bomb threat. All threats received will be regarded as valid, and an appropriate response initiated. Most bomb threats are received by telephone; however they may be received through the postal mail, or by e-mail.

1. Telephone Threats

The employee receiving the call should attempt to obtain the following information:

- Where the device has been placed

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- What the bomb looks like
- When it is expected to explode
- What will cause it to explode
- Who placed the device
- Why the device was placed
- Details about the caller (name, sex, age, accents, demeanor, etc.)
- Statements made by the caller
- The caller's telephone number (if displayed on caller ID).
- Any unusual or identifiable background noises.

2. Postal Mail or Written Threats

Written threats should be handled as little as possible and should be treated as physical evidence.

3. E-Mail Threats

If a bomb threat is received by e-mail, do not touch the computer further. Simply leave the immediate area of the computer and secure the area. Do not allow anyone to touch the computer unless it is necessary to obtain information about the threat.

B. Notifications

If a bomb threat is received by an employee of the Department, the employee shall immediately notify the Communications Center and, as soon as practicable, notify his supervisor.

C. Response to Incidents

The following procedures will be used in response to a bomb threat.

1. Respond to the area and advise Communications prior to your arrival.
2. Do not transmit from any radio within 300 yards of the scene. Keep in contact with the Communications Center by land line telephone (if available).
3. Interview the victim/call recipient and determine any other pertinent information necessary to decide further action.
4. If available, meet with the property owner/person in authority. Allow him to decide if a search and/or evacuation of the premise will be conducted. An officer can not order the property owner/person in authority to evacuate the premises based upon the receipt of a bomb threat. The officer may only advise him that it is his decision to make.

5. If the threat is to the Department, but no specific facility or individual has been named, the Department will respond to the threat as if the Destructive Device could be located at any Departmental facility.

D. Building/Area Searches

1. Persons familiar with the building and surrounding areas should conduct the search and be capable of identifying unusual objects. Officers may accompany and assist in the search.
2. Special attention should be given to areas accessible to the general public.
3. Searchers should not touch or remove any suspicious or out of place items or objects located during the search.
4. The search should start outside. Close attention should be given to piles of leaves, shrubbery, refuse, etc. Additionally, searchers should be attentive to such things as trash cans that do not belong in an area, unfamiliar automobiles, etc.
5. When moving inside the search should begin at the lowest level and work upward, completely searching each level before changing floors.
 - a. In addition to searching any area in which a bomb could be placed, searchers should listen for any unusual sounds, look for damaged ceiling tiles, tiles out of place, damaged air ducts, etc.
 - b. Conditions of the rooms or objects should not be altered in any way. Fans, heaters, lights or electrical switches should not be turned on or off.

E. Vehicle Searches

If investigation indicates that a vehicle bomb may be present, the Bomb Squad should be notified.

1. Routinely, a bomb in a building is normally set to detonate at a particular time. A vehicle bomb often has a triggering device.
2. Initial action is to evaluate the information available. Interview the driver or owner about any threats, evidence of the vehicle being tampered with, suspicious noises, unfamiliar objects, etc.
3. Determine when the vehicle was last operated. Attempt to determine if it was locked, who the next intended driver was, and if that person has noticed anything suspicious recently during his travels (being followed).
4. Check the area around the vehicle for signs of tampering. Look for pieces

of tape, wire insulation, and fluids in areas other than from the mechanical areas of the vehicle.

IV. ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN IF NO DESTRUCTIVE DEVICE IS LCOATED

The owner/person in authority will be notified of the result of the search. The owner/person in charge should be advised that merely because a bomb was not located, does not infer that there is no Destructive Device.

V. ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN IF A DESTRUCTIVE DEVICE IS LOCATED

Officers may be made aware of, or come into contact with, Destructive Devices during their daily activities. This contact could be with relatively fresh products, such as dynamite at a construction site, or materials may be encountered which had meant to explode, but did not. This includes (such as a hand grenade or artillery shell), or a device that was purposefully placed at a location to destroy property or terrorize people. Should personnel come into contact with an actual or suspected Destructive Device:

- A.** A critical incident response will be initiated in accordance with Policy 4.01 “Critical Incident Management.”
- B.** A perimeter will be established around the incident location (at least 300 yards including airspace).
 - 1. Officer(s) at the scene should evacuate all persons, doing everything possible to minimize the risk of injury or death. Should the device be found within or adjacent to a facility, the facility should be evacuated regardless of costs or obligations to the establishment.
 - 2. Evacuation should be approached in a calm, professional manner that will inspire confidence by the public and prevent panic.
 - 3. Evacuees should be instructed to take their personal property with them and unlock all doors (if possible) as they leave.
 - 4. Evacuees should be directed to a designated evacuation area. A security sweep of this area should be conducted prior to the arrival of evacuees.
 - 5. Those who remain in the area should be instructed to take cover behind solid, protective cover and to avoid standing in front of glass windows.
- C.** The location shall be treated as a crime scene and shall be secured until all evidence is collected for further investigation.
- D.** **Anticipate that there is a second device. The secondary device may be strategically located and could be designed as an anti-personnel device.**
- E.** No one other than the Bomb Squad Technician or a designated bomb disposal

officer from another agency shall neutralize, disarm, move, transport, handle, remove, or release any suspicious materials or Destructive Devices if located, unless directed by a member of the Bomb Squad or unless further threat to life cannot be avoided.

VI. POST-EXPLOSION PROCEDURES

The following procedures will be utilized whenever a Destructive Device detonates, regardless of whether there was a bomb threat prior to the detonation.

- A. Anticipate that there is a second device. The secondary device may be strategically located and could be designed as an anti-personnel device.**
- B.** First responding supervisors should ensure that a perimeter at 300 yards from the detonation point is established as soon as possible.
- C.** Look out for falling debris.
- D.** Look out for broken gas lines and downed power lines. Be aware of broken water lines or standing water, especially if near downed power lines.
- E.** Notify other departments as needed (e.g. – casualties, fire, etc.).

VII. Investigative Procedures

- A.** An incident report will be completed on all calls regarding bomb threats or the location of a suspected Destructive Device.
- B.** Bomb threats and located Destructive Devices (where there is no injury/death) will be investigated by the Bomb Squad. Other investigators may assist as necessary.
- C.** Incidents involving injury or death due to a Destructive Device will be investigated by the Crimes Against Persons Unit with assistance from the Bomb Squad.
- D.** If possible, located devices or suspected devices should be photographed in their original location by Bomb Squad personnel.