



ABINGTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

OG – 400-106

Response to Bomb Threats

1.0 PURPOSE

To provide an outline of operations, procedures and responsibilities when responding to a bomb threat or a founded device

2.0 RESPONSIBILITY

It should be the responsibility of each firefighter to exercise the appropriate control dictated by his or her rank in the implementation of this procedure.

2.1 Bomb Scene Responsibility

- 2.1.1 Pre-Detonation incidents are a Police Incident with the Fire Department as a supporting unit.
- 2.1.2 Post-Detonation Incidents are a Fire Incident with the Police Department as a supporting agency.
- 2.1.3 For the purpose of this procedure, a suspected object/device scene is the responsibility of the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department Bomb Disposal Unit unless and/or until a detonation occurs.
- 2.1.4 Normal police procedure should be to notify the appropriate fire department after a device is discovered. Follow local protocols.
- 2.1.5 Only Certified Hazardous Device Technicians from the Bomb Disposal Unit will handle, deactivated, remove, examine or transport and found explosive material. The Bomb Disposal Unit will be the final authority on the method of disposal.









3.0 PROCEDURE

3.1 Procedures When Device is Found but not Detonated

- 3.1.1 The Incident Commander should coordinate activities with the senior police official in command. Hydrants close to the building should be avoided as blown glass can cause severe injury several hundred feet in all directions. The Incident Commander should designate a "STAGING AREA" to ensure strict command and control of all personnel at the scene.
- 3.1.2 The Incident Commander, **via landline phone**, should designate a staging area, with the necessary equipment, outside the damage and injury perimeter, where all personnel are to report. A safe minimum distance is determined by the type and size of the device. Refer to the standoff distance card for specific standoff distances. From here, orders would be issued and firefighters should return to this area upon completion of their assignments, thus giving the Incident Commander better control. The staging area also protects firefighters who are not involved in any other activity by keeping them in a remote area.

- 3.1.3 Consider connecting engines to hydrants stretching water lines for service.
- 3.1.4 Waterlines should be stretched and connected to standpipes and sprinklers where applicable.
- 3.1.5 Fire personnel should be used to aid in evacuation of necessary areas as directed by police official in command. Consideration should be given to the stretching of appropriate water lines to the front and rear of the building. These lines should be utilized to protect the evacuation points should a detonation occur.
- 3.1.6 An Advance Life Support (ALS) unit should be dispatched to the staging area before bomb techs start their work.
- 3.1.7 **There should be no radio transmission and/or cellular phone use within 500 feet of the device.**
 - 3.1.7.1 **NOTE:** The following exception as per the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department Bomb Disposal Unit is in effect: Firefighters may broadcast over fire radio or use cell phones under exigent/emergency conditions only when **ALL** of the following conditions are met:
 - 3.1.7.1.1 Firefighters and other personnel must be at least 100 feet from any suspect object/device before utilizing communication equipment.
 - 3.1.7.1.2 Firefighters and others must be under/behind hard cover (apparatus, building, wall, etc.)
 - 3.1.7.1.3 Members and others must never be in line of sight (direct distance with unobstructed view) of any suspect object/device. Remember – if you can see it – it can see you.

3.1.8 Weight and Distance Table:

 Safety Guidelines for Bomb Incident Stand Offs  (Note: Explosive weights in pounds; Distances are in feet)				
THREAT	THREAT DESCRIPTION	EXPLOSIVE CAPACITY	BUILDING EVACUATION DISTANCES	OUTSIDE EVACUATION DISTANCES
	Letters/Manila Envelopes	.25 lbs to 2 lbs	75 FT.	300 FT.
	Pipe Bomb	5 lbs.	150 FT.	850 FT.
	Brief Case/Back Pack	50 lbs.	250 FT.	1,500 FT
	55 Gallon Drum	100 lbs.-200 lbs.	350 FT.	2,000 FT
	Sedan	1000 lbs.	550 FT.	2750 FT
	Van/ Small Truck	5000 lbs.	700 FT.	3750 FT

- 3.1.9 All protective clothing with face shields down, should be worn by all personnel, **including the pump operator.**
- 3.1.10 The Incident Commander should consider notifying the utility companies as to whether the utilities should be shut down prior to or after the incident.

3.2 Procedure where Device has Detonated

- 3.2.1 Normal procedures outlined in Section 3.1 should be followed.

- 3.2.2 Firefighting and rescue operations should proceed, **exercising extreme care as secondary explosions are a possibility**. Protection of fire personnel should be of prime concern unless a life hazard is experienced.

3.3 Scene where Device is Discovered by Fire Department Personnel

- 3.3.1 Move the apparatus out of the immediate area a minimum of 500 feet and notify Emergency Dispatch Services. This notification should be done **via hard line phone**, if at all possible. If the apparatus is at least 500 feet away from the incident then the Fire Radio can be used. Emergency Dispatch Services will, in turn, notify the appropriate Police Department and Montgomery County's Bomb Disposal Unit.
- 3.3.2 An immediate evacuation of the building and adjoining area should be carried out, using the minimum standoff distances based on the size and type of device.
- 3.3.3 Normal procedures outlined in Section 3.1 should be followed.
- 3.3.4 It must be remembered that bombs are designed to explode, and there is no positive way for the untrained to handle them safely. Never pick up or attempt to move any suspicious device. Many bombs are made in such a manner as to detonate in one of the following conditions:
 - 3.3.4.1 Cutting or untying a string can release and explode a primer.
 - 3.3.4.2 Turning a cylindrical object can tilt or break a vial, thereby spilling a chemical mixture causing detonation.
 - 3.3.4.3 Shaking a bomb can complete circuits when mercury switches are used.
 - 3.3.4.4 Tearing a glued wrapper from a package may release the cover of a box and activate an electric current.
 - 3.3.4.5 Unscrewing a cap when explosives may be adhered to threads.

4.0 EXPLOSIVE POST-BLAST RESPONSE

Post-blast (or post-detonation) response takes place after an explosion has occurred. An explosives event has the potential to overwhelm first responders due to the large number of victims, fatalities and property destruction.

4.1 Dispatch and Response Phase

- 4.1.1 When responding get all the dispatch information available. Nature of the call and location are important.

4.2 Arrival on Scene

- 4.2.1 Proceed with extreme caution for your own safety.
- 4.2.2 Slow down when approaching the area and conduct a 360-degree scan during your scene size-up or "windshield survey".
- 4.2.3 Look for objects and people that seem out of place for the location or time of the call – if it looks suspicious it probably is.
- 4.2.4 Use Staging Area to limit number of responders – don't stack up responders and resources in one location.
- 4.2.5 Avoid entering blast areas (Hot Zone) unless it is necessary to save lives.
- 4.2.6 **ALWAYS BE AWARE OF SECONDARY DEVICES**

4.3 Approaching the Area

- 4.3.1 Rapidly implement the Incident Command System using a Unified Command Structure.

- 4.3.2 Establish Hazard Control Zones around the incident (Hot, Warm, Cold).
- 4.3.3 Always have an escape route open to leave the scene quickly if needed. (Apparatus can be backed into scene to ensure a quick egress).
- 4.3.4 All responders should wear all available Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- 4.3.5 Appropriate agencies – Fire, EMS, law enforcement, specialized bomb personnel, Emergency Management, and hospitals should be notified as soon as possible if there is a report of an incident or possible incident.
- 4.3.6 If multiple casualties, request County DPS Mass Casualty Plan activation.
- 4.3.7 **BE VERY CAUTIOUS OF ANY ITEMS THAT AROUSE YOUR CURIOSITY**

4.4 Response Operations

- 4.4.1 An explosives incident has the potential for a large number of victims with very traumatic injuries.
- 4.4.2 Searching beyond the immediate scene for victims unable to call for help. This may be needed in a dense urban environment, where persons in upper stories of a building were injured/affected, directly by the attack, or anyone suffering a health condition.
- 4.4.3 Some seriously injured victims may have no visible wounds and some victims may be beyond help.
- 4.4.4 Quickly remove victims from the area and render aid in a secure location. Triage should be conducted outside the hazard area.
- 4.4.5 Implement County mass casualty/mass fatality procedures.
- 4.4.6 Responders should immediately monitor for other hazards such as chemical agents, gases or radioactive materials. Decon may be needed.
- 4.4.7 Be aware of secondary hazards such as unstable structures, damaged utilities, hanging debris, void spaces and other physical hazards.
- 4.4.8 Consider the need for other assets such as Urban Search and Rescue, Hazardous Materials Teams, Incident Management Teams, etc.
- 4.4.9 **Be aware of the possibility of secondary devices and attacks. This type of event has targeted responders.**

4.5 Crime Scene Considerations

- 4.5.1 Establish as large a crime scene perimeter as possible. Rule of thumb for the perimeter is to extend the perimeter 50% from the farthest piece of evidence located.
- 4.5.2 Plan on an intensive media response. Establish Joint Information Center (JIC).
- 4.5.3 Make immediate notifications of local, state and federal resources.
- 4.5.4 Plan on an extensive, multi-day crime scene investigation.

4.0 RECORDS

- 4.1 Master Document Listing
- 4.2 Training Records