

BOMB THREATS

What should I know about bomb threats?

Goals of a Bomb Threat: Motivation and goals for making a bomb threat usually comes from one of two goals:

- **The Hoax Caller:** The most frequent goal is to create an atmosphere of panic and anxiety, which are hoped to **disrupt normal activities or operations** at the location where the explosive device is **alleged** to be placed.
- **The Credible Caller:** The caller has a definite knowledge or believes that an explosive device has been or will be placed, and he or she wants to warn of the threat to **minimize personal injuries or property damage**. The caller may be the person placing the bomb or someone who has become aware of information they believe to be credible.

What are types of bomb threats?

Bomb threats usually occur by telephone, however, these types of threats may also be communicated by regular mail or e-mail. Bomb threats may also be implied, by the discovery of a suspicious package, envelope or other article that, on its face, may look or sound like a bomb.

- **The Phone Threat:** Telephone Bomb Threats are the most common. A person receiving a bomb threat by phone SHOULD NOT disconnect the caller. If possible, the call should be transferred to University Police Dispatch, where it can be handled most effectively. If that is not possible, the receiver should remain calm and try to obtain as much information as possible before the caller hangs up. In this case, the receiver should immediately contact campus police and provide the information obtained.
 - Information You Should Obtain (if possible):
 - **When** will it (they) explode?
 - **Where** is it (they) located?
 - **What** does it (they) look like?
 - **What** kind of a bomb(s) is it?
 - **Who** is (are) the target(s)?
 - **Who** is the caller and how can he or she be reached?
 - **Why** was it (they) placed?
- **The Letter Threat:** A bomb threat received by letter or in other form of writing should be retained, along with the envelope itself. Once the person opening the letter realizes what it is, **University Police Dispatch should be contacted immediately**. The person opening the letter should handle the document as little as possible, to protect it as a possible evidence exhibit.
- **The E-Mail Threat:** E-mail is becoming a more and more frequent source of harassing communication. Although e-mail is not very private, experienced persons can create e-mail accounts under fictitious names and use public computers to send it. So while anonymity is not the rule, it is possible. So the medium does have the potential for use in a bomb threat scenario. A person receiving a bomb threat via e-mail should **immediately contact University Police Dispatch**. Again, the message should not be deleted.
- **The Suspicious Package, Letter or Other Item:** In recent years, with increases in technology, *bombs can be quite inconspicuous*, like the Unabomber's letter bombs. Bombs can be quite large and crude, however, such as vehicles packed with fertilizer and a combustible. **Any unusual object or even a strange vehicle should be immediately reported to University Police Dispatch**. DO NOT try to handle it or open it.
 - **See Suspicious Package section for more information**
- **Official Bomb and Incendiary Device Expert:** The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Bomb Disposal Unit is the official police authority certified in handling and disposing of possible bomb devices. While our University Police Office may be called on to search for, locate, or isolate a

possible bomb, **NO employee of the University is authorized to handle or otherwise try to open or dispose of the device.**

What happens?

As is true in every emergency, the protection of persons and property from harm or further harm is of paramount importance. By using established procedures, a bomb threat can be managed effectively with the least amount of panic and risk.

- **Initial Receiver of the Call:** A calm, collected demeanor is necessary. Expeditiously transferring the call to University Police Dispatch or obtaining as much information from the caller as possible (and then calling University Police Dispatch) is crucial.
- **University Police Dispatcher:**
 1. **Initial Response:** Upon receiving a bomb threat or notice of a bomb threat, the dispatcher must immediately notify the University Police Shift Supervisor.
 2. **Chief's Notification:** The Chief of University Police should also be notified by the Dispatcher as soon as circumstances allow.
 3. **University Police Investigator's Notification:** The on-call University Police Investigator should also be contacted and directed to respond to the scene.
 4. **University Environmental Health and Safety Officer Notification:** The University EHS Officer should also be contacted and directed to respond to the scene.
 5. **FBI Bomb Threat Form:** The Dispatcher must then complete the FBI Bomb Threat Form. The form has two parts. One is to be completed if the threat is received by someone other than the University Police Office directly. The other part is to be completed if the threat is communicated directly to University Police.
- **University Police Shift Supervisor:**
 1. **Initial Response:** The Shift Supervisor must immediately respond to the scene or location identified by call information, which is passed on by the University Police Dispatcher.
 2. **Police Radio Communications:** The Shift Supervisor must issue instructions for all radios to be turned off. Officers carrying other personal electric equipment such as cell phones or pagers, for example, should also be instructed to turn them off. The Office of University Police places restrictions on electronics or electrical equipment that may have the potential to activate bomb devices.
 3. **On-Scene Assessment:** Once on the scene, the Shift Supervisor must assess the situation and determine if the building or a larger area should be evacuated and effect that process. If the University Police Investigator has arrived, the Shift Supervisor and the Investigator should collaborate on the on-scene assessment. If the Chief of University Police is on the scene at that time, the chief should make the decision as to whether or not to evacuate employees and/or students. If the Chief is not on scene, the Shift Supervisor should then contact the Chief or other most senior police officer available to provide a verbal assessment of the situation.
 - a. **Factors in Determining Whether or Not to Evacuate a Building or Area of Campus:**
 - 1) the credibility of the source of the information;
 - 2) specific information provided by the caller;

3) type, size, location and human occupancy of the building or area;

4) the on-scene assessment of the device (if found);

5) Time: In the event that the alleged time of detonation of the device is known and presuming that evacuation is possible, the evacuation should be implemented in a manner that provides maximum time for evacuation prior to the possible detonation.

- University Police Chief (or other senior-most police command officer)

1. **Emergency Management Coordinator's Role:** The University Police Chief must follow the President's COOP Plan's general emergency notification procedures relating to notification of the University's senior administrators, as necessary.

2. **Request for Outside Assistance:** The Chief should determine which, if any, outside law enforcement or emergency personnel should be requested to respond to the scene including, but not limited to, Fire Departments and the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Bomb Disposal Unit.

- Search of Premises:

1. **Site Security:** Once the building has been evacuated, all exterior entrances to the building must be secured and monitored to prevent re-entry by unauthorized (non-police, fire and rescue) personnel. If the device happens to be located outside a building, an adequate and protected security perimeter must be established and monitored. Barricades should be considered. Opening of windows and/or interior doors might also be considered under some circumstances.

2. **Direction of the Search:** If a bomb threat identifies a particular building or location of an alleged bomb, the senior police line officer on the scene must direct the search.

3. **Searchers:** Only campus police officers or other emergency police, fire or rescue personnel responding to the scene may participate in the search.

a. Employees: If there is sufficient time and effective means of communication is possible, employees may be requested to quickly look at their own work area to determine if anything suspicious is obvious. This may possibly expedite the location of the suspected device. The intent is not, however, to create any increased potential for risk of harm to employees.

b. Students or Visitors: Under no circumstances should students or visitors be permitted to participate in a building or location search for a suspected bomb.

- Location of the Possible Explosive Device: Once the alleged device has been located the site will be secured until the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Bomb Disposal Unit arrives and disposes of the device.

1. **Command Transfer:** At the time the Bomb Disposal Unit arrives, command of the scene will shift to the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office.

- Explosive Detonation: If a device detonated before it can be safely removed, provision of the COOP must be referred to for specific emergency management protocols. Increasing the scope of evacuation should also be considered.

What should I know about secondary explosions?

*Secondary explosions may be possible due to a number of circumstances, such as **incomplete initial detonation, the presence of flammable or hazardous chemicals or fuel in the building, or***

additional bombs. *Caution should be taken to ensure that the event(s) is concluded before assuming it is.*

When should I re-enter the building?

- **No Suspected Bomb Device Found:** If a thorough search of the building or location fails to produce a suspicious device, the senior command police officer with jurisdiction at the scene will determine when it is safe to re-enter the building.
- **Suspected Device Removed:** Once the suspected device(s) have been safely removed, the senior police command officer on the scene may determine the building or location safe for re-occupancy.

What are state and federal regulations regarding bomb threats?

If the bombing is a suspected terrorist bombing, the FBI must be notified. Each FBI Field Office has a Post-Blast Emergency Response Team consisting of one supervisor, one bomb technician, and one crime scene evidence technician.

What are other resources I can refer to?

- **The State of Florida's Terrorist Incident Response Plan,** Annex B contains additional detail on treatment of terrorist bombings.
- **The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office** have a large array of equipment that could be employed to assist in dealing with suspected bomb emergency incidents, to compliment their bomb disposal team. They have armored vehicles, robots, aircraft, a bomb disposal truck, crime scene vans, radiological monitoring equipment, x-ray equipment, and a mobile command post with radio communications.

General Bomb Threat Checklist

BOMB THREAT CHECKLIST

1. When is the bomb going to explode?
2. Where is the bomb right now?
3. What does the bomb look like?
4. What kind of bomb is it?
5. what will cause the bomb to explode?
6. Did you place the bomb?
7. Why?
8. What is your address?
9. What is your name?

Exact wording of bomb threat:

Sex of caller _____ Race _____ Age _____ Length of call _____

Telephone number at which call is received:

Time call received _____ Date call was received ____ / ____ / ____

Caller's voice was:	_____ calm	_____ nasal	_____ soft
	_____ angry	_____ stutter	_____ loud
	_____ excited	_____ lisp	_____ laughter
	_____ slow	_____ rasp	_____ crying
	_____ rapid	_____ deep	_____ normal