

St. Joseph, Missouri Police Department



DIRECTIVE TYPE: GENERAL ORDER		INDEX NUMBER: GO0032
SUBJECT: Bomb Threats and Explosive Devices		
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I. Policy

It is the policy of this Department to take all reasonable measures to maximize the safety of the public and Department members in situations involving the use or potential use of explosives. Each bomb threat must be evaluated and action taken based upon all the circumstances surrounding the call. Bomb threats received at schools will be handled in accordance with the procedures outlined in this General Order.

II. Procedure

A. Communications Center Responsibility:

1. When the Communications Center receives a call of a bomb threat, bombing, or non-detonated explosive substance, a member shall be dispatched immediately and a Shift Supervisor notified. The Fire Department and EMS Personnel shall also be notified.
 - a. Fire/EMS personnel and apparatus shall be directed to stand by at least 100 yards from the scene. Radio silence is to be observed.
 - b. The dispatcher shall attempt to determine any specific safety concerns upon receipt of the call, and will inform responding units of any information they could utilize when handling the incident, including a safe point of entry.
2. When dispatching a bomb threat:
 - a. The nature of the call and the location shall be given to ALL field units.
 - b. Any unit near the scene shall be advised to drive away from it BEFORE responding by radio. NO radio transmissions shall take place from any field unit closer than 100 yards from the scene.
3. Before reaching the scene, members may be advised to communicate with the Communications Center. No cell phones are to be used within 100 yards of the scene.

4. Upon receipt of a bomb threat by the suspect:
 - a. Maintain a calm, professional approach to the call;
 - b. Make notes as to time of call, place(s), or any other pertinent facts or information that the caller relates or suggests (i.e., possible age of caller, race, gender, possible accent etc.);
 - c. Attempt to ascertain from the caller the location of the bomb and detonation time. If the time frame received by the victim or given to the dispatcher is one hour or less, the victim should be advised to evacuate until the mentioned time and an additional fifteen minutes has passed.
 - d. Pay special attention to the caller and how they speak (i.e., terms used, possible intoxication, any noticeable speech impediments, etc.);
 - e. Listen for background noise (i.e., traffic sounds, music, someone speaking); and
 - f. Attempt to keep the caller on the line as long as possible. Attempt to determine the reason for the threat or actual bomb placement and what they are attempting to achieve by making the threat.

B. Patrol Division Responsibility:

1. When the bomb threat is either called into the Department or received first by the victim:

- a. The district car assigned will proceed directly to the location of the incident. A Shift Supervisor will also respond to the scene. Responding members shall do so expeditiously, but without use of emergency equipment. Members shall shut off all radio devices and cell phones at least 100 yards prior to scene.
- b. Members entering the area should remain aware of suspicious cars, people/positions while responding to the scene. If a specific time frame that is one hour or less has been given for bomb detonation the member may suggest the victim evacuate until that time and an additional fifteen minutes has passed. After this, a search of the premises may be conducted at the discretion of the victim and police.
- c. On arrival the member(s) will attempt to contact the owner or person-in-charge of the premises (hereafter referred to as the victim). The member(s) will either inform the victim of the nature of the incident or gather information from the victim. The member(s) will **suggest** to the victim how to conduct a search.
 - 1) Do not turn on or off any electrical device or lights during the search.
 - 2) First search the room visually (in thirds) from a standing point at the entry-way.
 - 3) Next physically search the room, starting at the bottom third (part closest to entry-way), the middle third second, and then the top third.
 - 4) Employees should assist in searching the area(s) in which they work, as they are most familiar with these areas and would

more readily notice any strange object. They should be instructed **not to touch any such object**.

- 5) Member(s) investigating suspicious objects called to their attention **shall not touch the object(s)**. If the member believes the object is or may be a bomb/threatening device, they will proceed to clear the area. It is at this point that the member's authority **exceeds** that of the victim because of public safety concerns.
 - a) Time permitting, prior to the evacuation, the member(s) will search and secure all exit points before the movement of people begins.
 - b) No personal items should be removed from the scene by persons being evacuated.
- 6) The member(s) shall notify the Communications Center that Explosive Ordinance Specialists (see section II.C.5.b) is needed at the scene. The Chief of Police and Division Commanders shall also be notified.
- 7) If the victim has already evacuated the building before members arrive, members should respond to the evacuation site first and secure it. The evacuation site should be no less than one hundred (100) yards from the building.

2. When a suspicious device has not yet been located:

- a. The victim may refuse to allow a search of the premises or cooperate with members upon their arrival. Should this occur, the member(s) will complete their report, identifying the victim by name and any witnesses who may have heard the victim refuse to initiate a search of the premises. When the victim refuses to have the premises searched, the member(s) will confirm that the victim is the owner or the person-in-charge and thereby authorized to make such a decision. The member(s) will indicate in their report that the victim refused to order a search of the premises and report fully the total circumstances involved. Upon completion of their report, the member(s) will return to duty. No further Department action will be taken when the victim refuses to allow a search of the premises.
- b. In cases of bomb threat, where no specific evidence exists of a bomb or explosive substance, the evacuation of the premises is at the discretion of the victim responsible for the property.
- c. When the victim initiates a search of the premises and no object believed to be a bomb and/or explosive device is found, the member(s) will notify the Communications Center and complete any required Department report.
- d. The report should include all tapes and letters in reference to the threat and any problem(s) observed at the premises. A financial report of lost productivity and salary expense due to the work disruption should also be included in the investigation. This part of the investigation may have to be conducted by detectives during follow-up.

3. Department Supervisor Responsibility:

- a.** When applicable, Supervisor(s) shall ensure notification of one of the agencies currently available (with Explosive Ordinance Specialists) to assist in the removal and the disposal of explosives.
 - 1)** The Division of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF)
 - 2)** Kansas City Missouri Police Department;
 - 3)** Johnson County Ks. Fire Department; and
 - 4)** Fort Leonard Wood Army Base.
- b.** The Supervisor/Incident Commander shall also ensure that utilities personnel (gas, electric, water, etc.) are contacted and available in the event Explosive Ordinance Personnel require service interruption.
- c.** The Supervisor (Incident Commander) is responsible for directing perimeter security and traffic flow/control operations. When necessary, a "Command Post", with telephone communications, may be established. It should be near the scene but not closer than 200 yards, and should be protected from the effects of any potential explosion.
 - 1)** Unless relieved by higher command authority, the Supervisor/Incident Commander shall maintain command of the perimeter and the Command Post, and will brief the Explosive Ordinance Specialists when they arrive.
 - a)** The Supervisor/Incident Commander will offer the responding Explosive Ordinance Specialists assistance in arriving at the scene, such as having a district car waiting for them near a major intersection or clearing an area for a helicopter to land should they choose this mode of travel.
 - b)** Media contact will be in the proximity of the Command Post and will be handled by a designated Public Information Officer. Media releases will be distributed by the Public Information Officer at specific intervals and/or the conclusion of the event.
 - c)** The Supervisor/Incident Commander shall ensure that the Chief of Police is kept updated on the event if they are not present at the scene.
 - 2)** The Supervisor/Incident Commander will work closely with the Explosive Ordinance Specialists and will instruct Department members in regards to their direction(s). No member shall be permitted into the danger zone without approval of the Supervisor/Incident Commander and/or the Explosive Ordinance Specialists.
 - 3)** Department Crime Scene Specialist(s) shall not be permitted onto the scene until it is determined safe by an Explosive Ordinance Specialist with approval from the Supervisor/Incident Commander.

- d. No member shall handle explosives and/or bring explosives to the Law Enforcement Center.
- e. Ammunition .50 caliber (or smaller) shall not be considered explosives and may be handled by the investigating member and booked into the Department's Evidence Room for appropriate disposal/disposition.
- f. Fireworks shall be considered explosives and will not be booked into the Evidence Room. Fireworks will be handled as specified in the Department Evidence Packaging Manual. Commercially produced fireworks may be handled by the investigating member. Homemade fireworks should be evaluated by the member and a Supervisor should be consulted to determine if an Explosive Ordinance Specialist should be contacted.
- g. The Supervisor/Incident Commander shall coordinate directly with the Explosive Ordinance Specialists to decide the most appropriate elimination of the known or suspected explosive device.

4. Exploded Devices:

- a. In cases where an explosion has occurred, the procedures for internal notification, scene security, and initial investigation are the same as in non-detonated devices. Federal guidelines should be followed for reporting any device or explosion.
- b. When the scene is secured, the Shift Supervisor shall ensure that Department Crime Scene Investigations Unit has been notified and will maintain perimeter security.
- c. No one shall be allowed into the danger zone except rescue personnel, Explosive Ordinance Specialists, and Crime Scene Investigators with approval. Explosions may cause structural damage and other non-detonated explosives may be present. People on the scene should use caution and no person should enter the danger zone except to prevent injury or death to another person.
 - 1) Fire Department experts should be consulted when deciding if a building is structurally sound in order to enter for rescue purposes and/or crime scene processing.
 - 2) If ATF personnel decide to respond to the event, Department members shall wait for their arrival and maintain perimeter security before processing the scene.
- d. After search and rescue is completed, the actual crime scene search will be coordinated between Department Crime Scene Investigators and ATF Investigators.
- e. The Crime Scene Investigator in charge of the scene shall notify the Shift Supervisor at the Command Post when examination of the scene is complete.

5. Bomb Threats at the Law Enforcement Center:

- a. When a bomb threat is received by a member, they shall immediately contact the Communications Center and shall relay all information to them. Communications Center personnel will follow applicable

procedure(s) outlined in this General Order if they are the recipient(s) of the bomb threat.

- b.** The Communications Center will then notify the Chief of Police, the Sheriff, and the Division/Watch Commander(s).
- c.** The respective officials (Chief of Police and Sheriff) will make the decision whether or not to evacuate their areas of the Law Enforcement Center.
- d.** The Chief of Police or their designee will assign personnel to conduct a search of the Police Department area(s). Members will follow all applicable procedure(s) outlined in this General Order while conducting the search.

Chris Connally, Chief of Police

Date