

THIRD EDITION

A Law Enforcement And Security Officers' Guide To Responding To

BOMB THREATS

Providing a Working Knowledge of Bombs, Preparing for Such Incidents, and Performing Basic Analysis of Potential Threats



CHIEF JIM SMITH,
A.S., B.S., M.S.S.

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SECURITY OFFICERS' GUIDE TO
RESPONDING TO BOMB THREATS**

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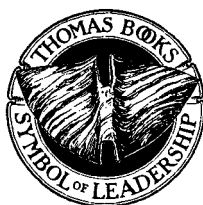
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By

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PREFACE

This text is designed to integrate information in a clear and concise format to allow the general law enforcement and security practitioner to respond to bomb threats, bomb incidents, or chemical-biological-radiological incidents. The text allows the reader to use the information as a general guide and develop local protocols to meet these incidents. With the current threat environment, increased vigilance and knowledge is incumbent upon all law enforcement and security officers whom must have a working knowledge of bombs, explosives and other threats for their own protection. The lack of knowledge can be a contributor to injury, death or the inability to mitigate these incidents. Bombs are far more likely to present a threat, however, the potential for chemical, biological or radiological attacks should not be discounted, and a significant amount of material is presented in this regard. The text allows preparation for such incidents and addresses specialty facilities that require advanced planning such as schools and medical facilities. It allows the practitioner to perform basic threat analysis of potential threats by groups or persons. The common methods to construct improvised explosive devices are covered. An emerging threat in many areas is clandestine drug laboratories. These threats are covered in detail along with techniques to recognize the requisite signatures of a clandestine drug laboratory. This text is not a substitute for trained and well-equipped bomb technicians but does provide the first responder critical information on what protective steps to take and when to seek outside assistance.

J.S.

INTRODUCTION

The average law enforcement or security officer will not encounter an actual bomb during their career. However, a probable scenario is officers will have to deal with suspicious packages, bomb threats and found explosives. In the post September 11, 2001 environment, what previously could be ignored or have minimal efforts directed to correct now must be reacted to with significant resources and considered a serious and valid threat. Biological threats have moved from the realm of possibility to a reality. The current evolution of terrorist tactics mandates the full spectrum including chemical events such as the Sarin attacks in Tokyo and radiological incidents are likely to occur within the United States. No facility, location or person is immune from domestic or international terrorism. Those facilities with significant international ties, symbolic value or densely occupied are particularly vulnerable to attack. One must remember the thrust of terrorism has oriented toward soft targets such as schools as in the Beslan attack, theatres as in the recent event in former USSR and other non-traditional targets to facilitate a more deadly and larger scale attacks. This text is written to allow the average public safety official or security officer to deal with these incidents. This material is not a replacement for trained bomb technicians with sophisticated equipment.

Bombings, terrorist attacks and letter bombs have become more commonplace. Statistics published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation report that the actual numbers of bombing attacks have decreased but their lethality has increased. One of the more disturbing factors is the growth of domestic terrorists, including fringe and hate groups which use bombs and arson as an attack modality. The Earth Liberation Front is an example of a group which targets businesses and developments selectively with arson attacks. In the past, bomb threats could be ignored with impunity, however, in the current climate such actions may result in injuries or deaths.

Law enforcement, public safety and security professionals must plan for and respond to incidents that involve bomb threats, chemical-biological threats and suspicious objects. Officers must take the steps as the first arriving

personnel which are proper. The failure to recognize and properly react to such an incident may result in catastrophic loss of life.

This text discusses the basic techniques for risk assessment, target and hazard identification. These are essential components in relating to the probability of a bombing attack and the potential outcome of such an attack. The common methods of bomb delivery, bomb construction and methods of triggering are discussed. Letter bombs, vehicle bombs and high-risk facilities such as aircraft, airports, medical facilities and schools are examined. The vulnerabilities and probable methods of attack are discussed.

The utilization of chemical, biological and radiological devices with the unique hazards associated with these devices is addressed. This text includes a section with protocols for emergency medical service personnel in treating those injured from blast, overpressure, shrapnel or chemical agents. Countermeasures and defensive efforts are addressed in sufficient detail to allow the public safety, law enforcement and security professional to make recommendations and to assess any actions taken. Also included are the resources that need to be identified along with a model bomb threat plan. The initial actions to be taken following an explosion and how to protect evidence are also discussed.

This text is not a replacement for trained and well-equipped bomb technicians and is designed to allow the first responder to make identification of suspect items and take appropriate actions until the bomb squad arrives.

The bomb squad should take definitive steps in relation to safe procedures.

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Chapter 1

THE ROLE OF THE FIRST RESPONDER

The first arriving person to most bomb threats, suspicious packages, or other suspicious incidents is either a security officer or law enforcement officer. Their role is critical in determining that a threat has been made or exists, confirming its apparent validity, obtaining the needed resources to respond to the perceived threat, and notifying supervisory personnel. If the threat is written then evidence preservation is important as significant amounts of trace evidence can be obtained. A verbal threat may be conveyed via telephone, via email, or in person. Call tracing, and exactly what was said are important. If the threat is associated with a suspicious object or package, then the situation needs to be escalated with isolation of the object or package and evacuation of the immediate area. If the threat was an in-person threat, then an immediate lookout needs to be broadcast for the person to locate and detain them. Care needs to be taken that the information transmitted contains the nature of the threat, such that responding officers are aware of the situation; if a suspect is involved, officers are aware that they may be dealing with an armed suspect potentially in possession of explosives.

Perhaps the most important factors are to follow agency procedure, perform an initial assessment, obtain the needed resources to begin a response to a threat or suspicious object, and notify a supervisor. Upon arrival the supervisor should assume command following the Incident Management protocols specified in the National Incident Management System. The issue of dealing with the management of a facility is always present. Many facilities, particularly government and large-

scale commercial operations, will have their own operational plans to deal with bomb threats, suspicious packages, and similar incidents.

Coordination and interfacing of resources becomes the issue. In most instances, the security supervisor or law enforcement supervisor will be asked for suggestions to mitigate the situation. If the facility is a private concern, then usually the ultimate decision regarding evacuation, searches, or similar activities resides with management. Most will want input in the decision-making process. Follow agency procedure and know what resources are available locally or how long they will take to arrive if available only through mutual aid.

Some considerations that must be addressed are:

- Is the threat a ruse to cause employees to leave the building for attack or to divert resources while another crime occurs such as a robbery at another location or theft at this location? Always consider a sniper attack of employees leaving or outside the building or a bank or other high-profile robbery in another location, or even a burglary of the evacuated structure.
- If an evacuation has taken place, did employees look around their work areas before leaving and take personal items with them? This may make a search of some areas unnecessary if employees performed this task. Further, employees would likely be able to identify any items not belonging in their work area.
- If an evacuation occurred, have the evacuation assembly areas been checked for suspicious objects, vehicles, or persons? Is the area upwind from a suspected device? Preferably the evacuation areas should be scanned for suspicious persons and objects, and the surrounding area should be scanned for potential assailants prior to evacuation. Always consider the incident a ruse to bring people into an unprotected area for attack with IEDs or firearms.
- Do the evacuation areas appear reasonably safe in relation to the threatened facility if evacuation is considered? Make certain no one is standing under window glass as even small amounts of blast overpressure will shatter glass. Falling glass is a serious hazard.
- Is there an explosive detection canine search team readily available? If the threat is credible, then consider deployment.

- How long will it take the bomb squad to arrive and does it perform searches? Because of the intensive manpower requirements of a search many bomb squads will not perform searches but will only examine suspicious objects.
- Does the bomb squad or other agency have a chemical sensor capable of detecting explosives through free air “sniffs” or swipes of suspicious objects? This may serve as a method to gain information about suspect items or locations as such sensors are specific for explosives and can detect trace quantities.
- What intelligence is available about this location and its occupants? One needs to assess carefully the potential for a credible threat based on the information available particularly if the location or persons within the location have been involved in a controversy.
- Is this a high-risk facility or occupied by persons at risk? Ask about a history of bomb threats or threats made against occupants or the facility.
- Is an evacuation warranted? Possibly, if a credible bomb or other threat exists and management is inclined to do so. An evacuation of at least the immediate area is a necessity if a suspicious object is present.

The most important role of the first responder is to ensure that adequate resources are dispatched and a supervisor is informed of the circumstances regarding the call or threat. Coordination with facility security and management is crucial.