



# Administrative Procedure: Emergency Evacuation Bomb Threats

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 While no conclusive solution can be offered to eliminate the problem of bomb threats which is a fact of life in our society today, it can be minimized. Each possible target will have its own unique problem areas.
- 1.2 To formulate a contingency plan the following points should be reviewed:
  - Who makes a bomb threat and for what reason?
  - How can a bomb threat be initially assessed as to its possible credibility?
  - What are the major considerations in the preparation of contingency plans?
  - When and how should searches and evacuations be carried out following the receipt of a threat?
  - What preventative measures can be taken to minimize the receipt of threats

## 2.0 Who makes a Bomb Threat and for what Reason?

- 2.1 You or I, a friend, a business associate, a relative, a disgruntled employee, a prankster, anyone can make a bomb threat. There is definitely no pattern, but there is a reason. It is generally accepted that the two most reasonable explanations are:
  1. The caller has definite knowledge that a device has been or will be placed and wants to minimize personal injury and property damage. (A person who places a device with the determination to kill or cause damage will likely never forewarn, for this would negate the desired result.)
  2. The caller wants to create an atmosphere of anxiety and panic which will, in turn, possibly result in a disruption of normal activities in the location that the device has purportedly been placed. (Disruption can result, but where leadership and planning exist, there will be less probability for panic.)

### 3.0 How can a Bomb Threat be Initially Assessed as to its Possible Credibility?

3.1 Bomb threats may normally be categorized as either a Specific or a Non-Specific Threat following an analysis of information received. This categorization could be of value in determining the extent to which contingency plans should be implemented.

#### 3.2 Specific Threat

Although the least common, the Specific Threat is the more credible. In this case, the perpetrator will provide more detailed information which could include statements describing the device, why it was placed, its exact or approximate location, the time of activation, etc.

#### 3.3 Non-Specific Threat

In this instance, an individual will make a simple statement to the effect that a device has been placed. Generally very little, if any, additional detail is conveyed before the threat is terminated.

Once again, the latter is the more common but neither can be immediately discredited without investigation.

### 4.0 What are the major considerations in the Preparation of Contingency Plans?

4.1 Once management has identified the problem, detailed but uncomplicated plans must be formulated to cover each possible emergency situation. The type and complexity of the plan will be primarily governed by:

- The Organizational Function;
- The Size In Area & Number of Personnel;
- The Location;
- The Available Resources.

4.2 No plan, regardless of how functional it would appear to be, can be effective until clear cut levels of authority have first been established and

recognized. It is also of vital importance that alternate authorities be designated at every level to assume the necessary responsibilities in the absence of the primarily tasked person. When this chain is established, each should be impressed with the importance of handling assignments in an authoritative manner without delay or display of emotion. Professionalism on the part of those in control during an emergency situation will tend to eliminate or minimize the risk of panic and will instill confidence in those subjected to abnormal procedures and physical relocation.

#### 4.3 Planning Considerations:

- Pre-plan with local authorities direction (police and fire departments).
- Determine levels of authority.
- Predetermine an evacuation site.
- Plan for relocation of operations and personnel.
- Obtain emergency contact numbers.
- Establish and determine lines of communication.
- Prepare bomb threat telephone procedures (see Appendix A).
- Ensure availability of building and surrounding area plans.
- Prepare evacuation procedures.
- Coordinate planning with fellow tenants and neighbours.
- Compare with plans of other organizations and amend as necessary.
- Ensure all employees are conversant with emergency plan procedures.
- Publicize organizational preparedness.
- Review and update emergency procedures annually for maximum effectiveness.
- Where possible, exercise procedures for practice and evaluation.
- Ensure employees are aware of dangers of touching or moving suspect devices.

## 5.0 When and How should a Search and Evacuation be Conducted?

5.1 The subjects of search and evacuation are very closely allied. The decision to conduct a search or an evacuation or both must be made by the authority so designated (or the alternate) in the initial plan. The decisions of how, when and in which order, can only be made after analysis of the known facts surrounding the incident or as the incident develops and additional information becomes available. It is equally important that decisions to discontinue or terminate a search or to order re-entry to previously evacuated premises be made and issued

by the responsible authority who originally ordered the institution of emergency procedures.

The choices available to the responsible authority follow.

## 5.2 Evacuation

There will be a complete evacuation of premises in each instance when route is determined safe by principal or designate.

Police will automatically be called.

When evacuation occurs, those evacuated should be relocated to a safe area no less than 300 meters distance where it is considered that injury from projected objects or falling glass would be minimal.

## 5.3 Evacuation Considerations:

- Provide an evacuation plan.
- Publish names of those authorized to order evacuation and re-entry.
- Establish an evacuation signal.
- Publish and make employees aware of evacuation plans.
- Ensure employees are aware of evacuation routes and alternates.
- Provide for evacuation priorities.
- Designate and train evacuation control teams.
- Establish safe evacuation 'holding areas'.
- Provide for control and well-being of evacuated persons.
- Provide for communication requirements.
- Provide for continuous security during evacuation.
- Determine procedures for utilities shut-down and reactivation.
- Establish a return to work procedure.

## 5.4 Assessment of the Premises

It should first be realized that those best qualified to carry out the most thorough search of any given area, are those familiar with that area – the employees or occupants. These persons would have a more complete knowledge and a better understanding of 'what belongs' or what might be 'foreign' to a location at any given time. Law enforcement authorities do not have the necessary intimate knowledge of the sight and sounds of all premises within their area of jurisdiction

and, although prepared to assist employees, would be less likely to recognize what could be a suspect package unless it was an undisguised device and this is not generally the rule. Management should make use of employee familiarity of the space in the interest of speed and thoroughness.

## 5.5 Search

A search of the premises will be conducted by the appropriate authorities.

## 5.6 Telephone Threats

Statistics prove that the majority of threats are received by telephone. In addition to determining the possibilities of call tracing and call recording (previously mentioned), all personnel should be instructed in procedures to follow when a telephoned threat is received.

- Obtain as much information as possible.
- Record as much information as possible.
- Keep the caller talking as long as possible.
- Question the caller if possible on his/her motives, type of device, location, etc.
- Record times.
- Listen for background noises during the conversation.
- Record accents, voice characteristics.
- Be polite and maintain calm.
- Use a checklist (see Appendix C3).

On receipt of a telephoned threat, the recipient should concentrate on recording the exact wording of the message and the time of receipt. Other items on the checklist can be filled in, circled or checked during the call if time permits, or immediately upon its termination.

## 6.0 What Preventative Measures can be taken to Minimize the Receipt of Threats?

6.1 By instituting good security and 'housekeeping' measures, it is conceivable that the frequency and seriousness of threat and bomb placement incidents can be lessened.

- Determine likely locations for device placement.

- Develop an inspection procedure for incoming packages.
- Control access to critical areas.
- Provide for key control.
- Ensure emergency exits are unobstructed.
- Inspect first aid and fire fighting equipment.
- Review surveillance operations.
- Review document safeguard procedures.
- Ensure adequate protective lighting for exterior and interior.

6.2 It is conceivable that the frequency and seriousness of threat and bomb placement incidents can be lessened.

- Provide for auxiliary lighting.
- Ensure good housekeeping practices are maintained.
- As per Board Policy P-O 615/AP-O 615 Video Surveillance.
- Post signs indicating electronic surveillance.
- Where possible, restrict control of entry.
- Plan for the unexpected.

## 7.0 Release of Information for the Media

7.1 Management should designate a spokesperson to provide the media with accurate information concerning all circumstances surrounding an incident. It is suggested that a developed relationship with the media will tend to deny the publicity which is often sought by the perpetrator and eliminate additional threats which could be generated as a result of publicity.

## References

- Ministry of Education, "Provincial Model for Local Police/School Board Protocol," (2015).
- George Zegarac, Deputy Minister of Education, Memorandum to Directors of Education and District School Boards, "Revised Provincial Model for a Local Police School Board Protocol," (9 September 2015).
- Ada Chidichimo Keon., "Ministry Releases New Bomb Threat Procedures". Borden Ladner Gervais, (January 2017).
- P-ES 309/AP-ES 309 Police and School Protocol.
- P-O 615/AP-O 615 Video Surveillance.



## APPENDIX A

### BOMB THREAT - OFFICE STAFF PROCEDURES

#### In The Event Of An Immediate Bomb Threat:

##### The Principal Or Designate will:

- 1) Scan evacuation route prior to ordering an evacuation (5.5). The Principal or Designate will announce the following message over the PA, "Everyone please leave the building in an orderly manner. Repeat. Everyone please leave the building in an orderly manner."
- 2) Notify the police department through line 911. The police will set into action the steps required to deal with the threat, including calls to all the proper authorities.
- 3) Contact the Superintendent of Education with the information of the bomb threat, followed up by a report to be submitted within the week.
- 4) Determine the need to search or deny access to evacuation routes should the caller designate the area in which the bomb has been placed.
- 5) Oversee the evacuation of all students and staff from the building:

Elevators will NOT be used.

##### Teachers Will:

- Each teacher should ensure that everyone has left the class, and follow the last student out.
- Each teacher will close the classroom door UNLESS he/she suspects that a bomb or suspicious package is in the room.
- Exit routes in areas designated by the caller should be avoided, if possible.
- Once students have reached the designated area of safety, the teacher responsible for them at that time of evacuation will check attendance.

##### Secretaries Will:

- Lock up the work areas.
- Inform all partnerships in the school building of the evacuation.
- Assist the Principal or Designate, upon request.

**Cross Reference: AP - ES 309 Police and School Protocol**

Appendix C2 - Individual School Plan for Bomb Threat Checklist and Appendix C3 - Bomb Threat Intake List

## APPENDIX C2

### Individual School Plan for Bomb Threat Checklist:

Bomb Threat Intake Form readily available to all office staff

Yes  No

Digital copy and /or hard copy locations:

Initial Threat Assessment Form Readily available with Response Tracking and Actions Log

Yes  No

Locations of above forms:

Entire Plan Location:

Primary Command Post Location:

Secondary Command Post Location:

Where are school camera system monitors located:

Alternate Police Liaison area and Master-Key/access card hand-off location

Name exact area (ie: door number or north/south/east/west/ configuration:

Who is responsible for authorizing evacuation?

Who can terminate evacuation and return students to class, following consultation with the police?

Primary assembly area:

Secondary assembly area:

Staff assigned to monitor evacuation:

Staff assigned to monitor assembly location:

Training has been completed with all staff on (Date):

Training has been completed with community partners and others who share the site (ie: daycare, etc.):

Parents/guardians have been informed of Bomb Threat Response Plan

Yes  No

Method:

Students have been informed on Bomb Threat Response Plan

Yes  No

Method:

## APPENDIX C3

### Bomb Threat Intake Checklist

The following guide will help you record the details of a bomb threat made by telephone.

#### When a bomb threat is received:

1. Listen.
2. Be calm and courteous.
3. Do not interrupt the caller.
4. Obtain as much information as possible.
5. Initiate call trace action (if available) while the call is ongoing.
6. Using a pre-arranged signal, notify your supervisor while the call is still ongoing.
7. Your supervisor should contact the local police service.
8. Complete the form provided below and give it to your supervisor.

#### Details of the bomb threat to be recorded:

- Date:
- Time (include a.m. or p.m.):
- Duration of call:
- Exact wording of threat:

#### Questions to ask:

- What time will the bomb explode?
- Where is it?
- What does it look like?
- Where are you calling from?
- Why did you place the bomb?
- What is your name?

#### Identifying characteristics of the caller:

Gender	
Estimated Age	
Accent	

Voice	Loud	Soft	Other -
Speech	Fast	Slow	Other -
Diction	Good	Nasal	Lisp or Other -
Manner	Emotional, Calm	Vulgar	Other -

Background Noise	
Voice was familiar	
Caller was familiar with the area	
Other information	