

### School Bomb Threats

Important information can be obtained by the manner in which bomb threats are received. Bomb threats are primarily received in two manners: phoned in threats, and written threats (email, notes, graffiti etc).

#### Phoned in threats:

When possible, every effort should be made to obtain detailed information from the caller such as: exact location of the bomb, time set for detonation, description of the bomb and type of explosive used. Details such as: time of call, exact words used, gender of caller, estimated age, identifiable accent, voice description of caller and identifiable background noise should also be noted. Immediately upon disconnecting the call, the recipient should hang up and using the same telephone, call 911 dispatch and advise them of the fact that a bomb threat has been received. Ideally this will preserve law enforcement's ability to preserve the electronic records identifying the originating telephone number of the caller. Immediately thereafter, the threat should be immediately reported to the building principal and the District's emergency phone.

#### Written threats:

Written threats shall be noted and immediately reported to the building principal and the District's emergency phone. Immediate steps shall also be taken to preserve physical or electronic evidence associated with the threat. For example, if the threat was in the form of graffiti located in a restroom, that restroom should be protected from further use, the graffiti should be photographed and further direction should be obtained from law enforcement officials regarding preservation of such evidence. Furthermore, if the threat comes in the form of electronic communication, in addition to printing out the communication, steps should be taken, in conjunction with information technology personnel, to preserve electronic features of the communication which may have evidentiary value.

The decision of whether or not to evacuate depends on the circumstances of each incident. Every incident should be handled individually and evaluated separately. If there is any probability of a threat to student or staff safety, the safety of students and staff must be paramount and evacuation procedures shall be followed.

Evacuation shall be conducted in conjunction with public safety officials. The minimum safe distance is at least 300 feet, but may be further depending upon recommendations of public safety officials.

In an evacuation or actual explosion situation, the building based incident commander (building principal or designee) shall, at the earliest possible opportunity, coordinate with responsible law enforcement officials in the evacuation or placement of students or staff. However, in the event that the site becomes designated as a crime scene by law enforcement or a dangerous area/fire danger by fire/rescue officials, then control of the scene shall be relinquished to the appropriate public safety officials.

#### **A. Evacuation Decision**

Except when the building has been declared to be a crime scene or dangerous building by public safety officials, the ultimate decision as to whether to evacuate or

not rests with the principal of the building. Each principal shall establish written guidelines as to the person who holds evacuation authority in the absence of the principal. Each building shall have at least two people other than the principal who possess evacuation authority and each shall be trained in procedures to be followed. The principal shall ensure that one of these people is on campus during all times when school is in session.

**If the principal or his/her designee determines the threat is most likely a hoax,** he/she will conduct a quiet search of the building as further described below. No classes will be dismissed. A written report shall be submitted to the superintendent.

**If the principal or his/her designee determines that a fair probability exists that the message is a dangerous threat,** 911 dispatch shall be notified immediately if not already notified of the threat. If, as required earlier in this policy, 911 dispatch has already been notified of the threat, then an additional communication shall be made advising that the decision has been made to evacuate. A silent evacuation should be initiated immediately. Teaching staff should remain with their classes until such time as the danger of explosion is past. Search procedures should be conducted under the direction of public safety officials. A written report shall be submitted to the superintendent.

## **B. Search Procedures**

**ALL UNIDENTIFIED OBJECTS FOUND DURING BOMB SEARCHES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED DANGEROUS AND LEFT UNTOUCHED, TO BE EXAMINED AND IDENTIFIED BY A QUALIFIED BOMB EXPERT.** Bombs come in many shapes and sizes. Some are disguised, while others may be as crude as sticks of dynamite held together with twine or tape. One must be suspicious of any object or package that cannot be identified.

Do not operate two-way radios or cellular telephones during bomb searches. Signals from such devices are known to trigger detonation mechanisms in bombs.

### **1. Search without Evacuation**

If the preliminary decision is to search the building without evacuating the students, the principal or his/her designee should enlist the voluntary aid of staff to conduct a cursory search of the building. Particular attention should be paid to those areas that are accessible to the public, such as hallways, stairways and stairwells, restrooms, unlocked lockers, unlocked unused classrooms, closets, and the like. A search should also be made on the outside of the building on low window ledges, window wells, and the base of all outside walls.

### **2. Search with Evacuation**

When it is determined that there is a fair probability that a bomb threat is credible, the building should be cleared immediately of all personnel so that the police can assume the responsibility of conducting the search. Automated door locking mechanisms shall be activated to prevent unauthorized persons from returning to the building until the area is declared safe.

4. **Disposition of Suspected Bombs**

In the event of the discovery of a suspected bomb, the following steps will be taken:

- a. **DO NOT TOUCH OR ATTEMPT TO MOVE THE OBJECT IN ANY MANNER.**
- b. Avoid moving any article or articles which in any way may be connected with the bomb to act as a triggering mechanism. Bombs have been set off by turning on a light switch or lifting a telephone receiver.
- c. Clear the danger area of all occupants.
- d. Assign staff at entrances to prevent others from entering.

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