

City of Virginia Beach Police Department

Bomb Threat Explosive Device Response Field Guide



A Guide for Department Personnel

- Methods for the Appropriate Response to Bomb Threats and Explosive Devices

*This Field Guide is Prepared and Updated by the Virginia Beach Police Department
Special Operations Bomb Squad,*

Under the Approval of the Chief of Police _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Bruno", is written over a horizontal line.

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Purpose

To establish a plan for responding to bomb threats and/or explosive devices.

Policy

The threat to utilize explosive devices poses an ever-increasing problem to public safety. The threat should never be taken for granted as being false.

Police Officers must act in a manner which is in the public interest. When responding to bomb threats or reports of explosive devices, the officer will be required to coordinate his efforts with citizens, public safety officials, and with other government agencies in order to ensure the successful conclusion of the incident.

Bomb Threats

The responding officer's role in a bomb threat call is to assist the person in charge of the affected premise. The Bomb Squad will have primary responsibility in locating and disarming the device and follow-up investigation of the incident. As such, the following guidelines are intended to assist sworn officers in responding safely to situations involving bomb threats or the discovery of explosive or suspected explosive devices.

Responsibilities of Call Takers

When the E911 Emergency Communications Division is advised of a bomb threat, an officer(s) and a supervisor shall be assigned to respond. The E911 Emergency Communications Division call taker should make every attempt to gather the information listed on the ATFE Bomb Threat Checklist (Form PD-111, located in appendix A) to assist in the investigation.

Responsibilities of Responding Officer

Upon arrival at the scene, the officer or supervisor will interview the person responsible for the premises, assess the situation, and discuss the need to evacuate the premises. The individual in charge of the premises shall decide whether or not to evacuate the premises. No member of this Department shall make any decision on whether or not to evacuate. If police advice is sought, it should always be to recommend evacuation.

If the person responsible for the premises does not want to conduct an evacuation, the officer shall prepare an Incident Based Report (IBR) for "Bomb Threat" and when directed by his supervisor, resume other duties. An IBR will be completed on all reported Bomb Threats. The IBR shall contain the details of the threat and the actions taken by the officer and the person responsible for the premises. The IBR will also include the names of the key persons involved or notified as a result of the investigation. A copy of all bomb threat offense reports will be forwarded to the Bomb Squad in Special Operations and the Virginia Beach Fire Department, Fire Investigations Division.

If the person responsible for the premises chooses to evacuate the building, this Department may assist under the approval and direction of a supervisor. The supervisor will also establish a safety zone perimeter, traffic and crowd control as appropriate. The supervisor shall assess the situation and contact the Bomb Squad Supervisor for guidance. The Bomb Squad Supervisor or his designee will advise on appropriate resources to be utilized.

If a search is warranted, it shall be conducted and directed by the individual in charge of the premises or his designee. These persons should be the most familiar with the structure, layout, and any unusual features of the building. The responding officer(s) may assist if requested by the individual responsible for the premises and with the approval of the on-scene supervisor. If warranted, the on-scene supervisor may contact the Bomb Squad Unit supervisor or designee to request additional resources in the form of Bomb Squad members and explosive detecting canine teams to assist in the search.

If no items of concern are located, the results will be documented on the IBR and upon direction of the on-scene supervisor, the officer will resume other duties.

Explosive Devices

In the event that a caller reports or a search of a building results in locating a suspicious package or explosive device, the responding officer or supervisor shall notify the Virginia Beach Police Department Bomb Squad supervisor. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The on-scene supervisor shall ensure that the building is evacuated, if it has not yet been accomplished. Officers shall assist in maintaining a safety perimeter and deny access to unauthorized personnel attempting to enter the location.

The Virginia Beach Fire Department, Fire Investigations Division, shall be notified by E911 Emergency Communications Division and an Investigator requested to respond. Notifications to other agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATFE), etc. shall be the responsibility of the Virginia Beach Fire Department Arson Investigator or the VBPD Bomb Squad supervisor. On arrival at the scene, the VBFD Battalion Officer is responsible for consolidating all incident command functions into a Unified Command and initiating an accountability system incorporating all resources assigned to the incident. If Police Officials have established a command post, the VBFD Battalion Officer will report to this position to confer with the Incident Commander. If not already present or command has not been established, the senior Police Official assigned to the case should be requested to respond to the command position to facilitate a unified incident command system. If an Emergency Operations Center has not already been established, and if the threat is real or suspected and the target is a significant or major building or business or could affect a large population such as a shopping mall or large office building, the VBFD Battalion Officer shall request that E911 Emergency Communications Division notify the Emergency Management Office of the current situation.

The Virginia Beach Police Department Bomb Squad or the agency responsible for the render safe procedure shall establish an inner perimeter as soon as possible and will immediately notify the Virginia Beach Fire Department Incident Commander of its location. Command and control of the inner perimeter at any incident involving a suspect package or explosive device shall be assumed by the agency or unit responsible for render safe procedures. The Fire Department Incident Commander shall assume outer perimeter command and control.

Guidelines for Establishing a Safe Perimeter

Establishing a safe outer perimeter is the responsibility of the Incident Commander and is most commonly accomplished by the incident commander designated by the Virginia Beach Fire Department. In cases where a Virginia Beach Police Department officer or supervisor is on scene in advance of Fire Department personnel, the supervisor may take steps in establishing a perimeter in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Attempt to gain a minimum evacuation standoff distance of 300 feet (100 yards) around a target location.
- Use crime scene tape to visually identify the perimeter boundary if possible and practical.
- If appropriate, use police vehicles or barricades to block traffic at strategic points in an effort to minimize vehicular traffic.
- Ensure complete evacuation of the affected premises, securing access to the building or adjacent area in conjunction with the Building Official. Prohibit re-entry into the building by unauthorized personnel.

Safety Considerations for First Responders

The safety of the officers and citizens in the area of a bomb threat that results in the discovery of an actual or suspected explosive device is critical. The following are general guidelines to promote safety in the area of an actual or suspected device:

- Be aware of your surroundings and look for secondary devices that may have been placed specifically in areas targeting first responders or evacuees.
- Do not alter existing ambient conditions:
 - Do not turn on/off lights.
 - Do not use cell phones within the 100-yard exclusion zone.
 - Do not turn off portable radios or MDT's, but refrain from transmitting within the 100-yard exclusion zone.
- As you approach, look for signs/symptoms that may indicate a potential hazardous material or chemical agent release.
- Sheltering in place is an option if the area offers substantial cover and may withstand a blast.
- If an item is identified as suspicious, first responders should not be in the direct line of sight of the device. A position of cover should be taken that affords the officer the ability to see anyone who may approach the device inadvertently and direct them away but does not expose the officer directly to the device should it detonate.

Investigative Responsibilities

The Virginia Beach Fire Department, Fire Investigations Division is responsible for the investigation of all bomb threats and the detonation of explosive devices. In the event of an injury or death, the Fire Investigations Division will work in cooperation with the Virginia Beach Police Department Investigative Division, Homicide Unit. The Virginia Beach Police Department Forensic Services Unit works in support of both investigative functions and will recover and process evidence only after the render safe procedure is conducted in the case of a suspicious device.

Special Considerations

Schools

The plan for responding to bomb threats and/or explosive devices in schools is maintained in the *Virginia Beach City Public Schools Emergency Response Plan* prepared by the Virginia Beach Public Schools. The Principal or his designee will assume responsibility for evacuation if deemed necessary.

Public Buildings

Refer to the individual emergency evacuation plans established for each City building available from the Occupational Safety Office. The individual Building Official will assume responsibility for evacuation if deemed necessary.

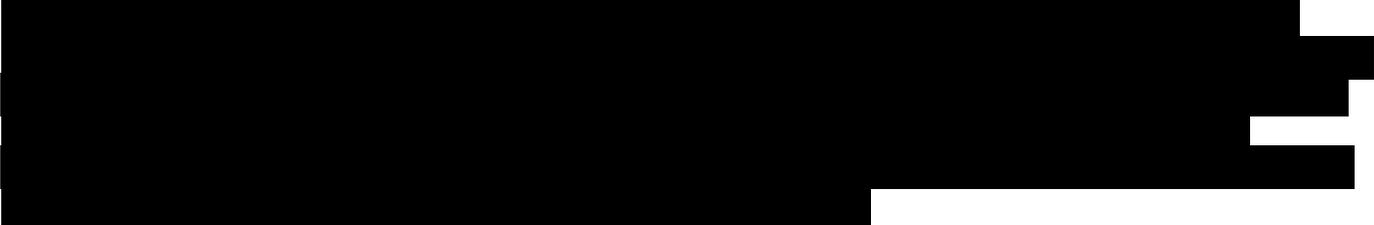
Police Buildings

Upon the receipt of a threat or the location of a suspicious device in the Public Safety Building or any Virginia Beach Police Department building, notification will be made to a supervisory member and an evacuation of visitors and personnel will be ordered via an internal public address system.

The Commanding Officer of the each Police Precinct or his designee will be responsible for ensuring that emergency exits are clearly marked and emergency exit routes are posted and maintained throughout the public safety building.

Virginia Beach Police Department Bomb Squad

The Virginia Beach Police Department Bomb Squad reports to the commanding officer of Special Operations. The Bomb Squad is responsible for the safe resolution of situations involving suspect items or packages and improvised explosive devices. The ultimate goal of the Bomb Squad is to resolve situations while limiting hazards to citizens and police personnel and properly dispose of explosive devices located and recovered in the City of Virginia Beach.



Administrative Responsibilities of the Bomb Squad

After action reviews are conducted immediately following the conclusion of an active incident. Those personnel involved in the incident participate in the critique. The results of the after action review are indicated in the critique section of the Bomb Squad's internal report call worksheet. Completed call worksheet forms are maintained by the Bomb Squad as required by the [Virginia Library Records and Retention Disposition Schedule](#).

A monthly and annual report is submitted to the Commanding Officer of Special Operations. The monthly reports contain a summary of each month's calls for service and incident outcome. The annual report specifies the type and number of calls for service per month, the number of man-hours spent on each call and the total number of calls for the calendar year.

Equipment needs are assessed annually in conjunction with budgetary review. Training needs are addressed on an as-needed and annual basis. At minimum, a mandatory FBI Hazardous Devices Technician Re-Certification is required every three years. Additionally, sixteen hours of in-house / on-site training is required per month.

Supplemental training is available through the FBI, BATFE, Department of Homeland Security, Office of Domestic Preparedness (ODP), Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Defense (DoD), Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM), Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and other outside agencies.

Training courses conducted or attended by Bomb Squad members are documented on form PD-188 Training Report.

Appendix A - VBPD Bomb Threat Checklist PD-111

PD-111
AST Rev: 04/04



Virginia Beach Police Department Bomb Threat Checklist



**IT IS IMPORTANT THAT PERSONS RECEIVING A BOMB THREAT
BE COURTEOUS TO THE CALLER AND REMAIN CALM.
LISTEN CAREFULLY; DO NOT INTERRUPT THE CALLER.**

Person receiving call: _____ Time: _____ Date: _____
Telephone number where call was received: _____ Department: _____

Caller's Identity:

- Male Female Adult Teen Child
- Is the voice familiar to you? Approximate age? _____

Voice:

- Loud Soft
- High Deep
- Pleasant Stressed

Speech Patterns:

- Fast Slow
- Distinct Broken
- Stutter Lisp

Demeanor:

- Calm Angry
- Rational Irrational
- Coherent Incoherent
- Disguised Intoxicated
- Righteous Deliberate
- Laughing Crying

Accent:

- Northern Western
- Southern
- Foreign

Language Used:

- Educated Average
- Poor Profane

Race:

- White Black
- Asian Hispanic
- Other

Country: _____

Specify: _____

Background Noise(s):

- Voices Party Music Animals Quiet Factory
- Traffic Aircraft Train Business Other: _____

Questions to Ask:

1. Where is the bomb? _____
2. When is it going to explode? _____
3. What kind of bomb is it? _____
4. What does it look like? _____
5. What will cause it to explode? _____
6. What can we do to stop it from exploding? _____
7. Did you place the bomb here? _____
8. Why did you set the bomb? _____
9. What is your name / address? _____
10. Where are you calling from? _____

On the back of this sheet, try to write out the exact message in its entirety.