



# BOMB THREATS & EXPLOSIVE DEVICES

**INDEX CODE: 2310**  
**EFFECTIVE DATE: 11-18-09**

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Contents:

- I. Policy
- II. Investigative Procedures
- III. Evacuation Procedures
- IV. Search Procedures
- V. Post-Explosion Procedures
- VI. Public Schools
- VII. Proponent Unit
- VIII. Cancellation

**I. POLICY**

- A. A bomb threat investigation requires the on-scene supervision of a sergeant or above.
  
- B. It is the policy of the Anne Arundel County Police Department to recommend evacuation of a premise when said premise is under the threat of an explosion.

**II. INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES**

Upon receipt of a bomb threat the following procedures will be used to investigate the incident:

**A. Communications Section**

- 1. Ascertain the following information from the caller, if possible:
  - a. Name, location, and telephone number of the complainant
  - b. Exact location of the bomb, if known
  - c. Time the bomb will detonate
  - d. Size and type of bomb or suspected device, if known.
- 2. Dispatch the closest uniform patrol officer and supervisor to the scene.
- 3. In cases where the presence of a bomb has been verified:
  - a. Notify and request the Fire Department be dispatched to the scene
  - b. Notify the State Fire Marshal
  - c. Notify the platoon commander and the district commander (if on-duty), or the on-call captain.

**B. Investigating Officers**

- 1. Turn off all electronic communication devices, including radio transmitters, cell phones, wireless computers, etc., within 500 feet of the location of the alleged bomb. Communication among officers at the scene will be by voice or hand signal. Assure that everyone at the scene (civilians, school administrators, Fire Department personnel, etc.) have turned off all electronic communication devices.

2. The first officer at the scene will locate the complainant, owner or occupant in charge of the building and suggest that the building be evacuated. A decision to evacuate prior to the actual discovery of a suspicious package or bomb will be the responsibility of the complainant, owner or occupant. The decision to evacuate a public school rests with the principal until the presence of a bomb is confirmed.
3. If a suspected bomb, explosive device, or suspicious package is located or confirmed, the ranking police official on the scene will order the immediate evacuation of the building, and will request emergency response of the Fire Department and the State Fire Marshal. Bomb disposal will be provided by the State Fire Marshal. Public Schools will follow their established procedures unless the ranking police official at the scene determines that this endangers lives.
4. If a decision is made to evacuate the building, all persons must be moved a minimum distance of 500 feet from the building.

**C. Patrol Supervisor**

1. Determine if further evacuation is required.
2. Deploy a sufficient number of personnel to assure an orderly evacuation, establish a safety and security perimeter and prevent entry of unauthorized persons into the evacuated area.
3. If a bomb, explosive device, or suspicious package is found, order the immediate evacuation of the building. Request emergency response from the Fire Department and the State Fire Marshal. Bomb disposal will be provided by the State Fire Marshal.
4. Determine if K-9 handlers with bomb specialist dogs are required.

**III. EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

- A. If there is reason to believe a bomb will detonate at a particular time, evacuate the building at least twenty (20) minutes prior to the known or suspected time of detonation. Such an evacuation should be conducted without announcing the word “bomb”, as this may create an air of panic. A reason such as gas leak or power problem may be offered as the reason for conducting the evacuation.
- B. All personnel will be directed to a perimeter at least 500 feet away from the building. Police lines will be established at this distance.
- C. The area that personnel are being evacuated to should be searched and cleared as necessary to be certain that it is safe to occupy.
- D. Do not permit the building to be reoccupied until any suspected device has been rendered safe, or, if no device was previously located, until a thorough search has been conducted and the building is determined to be safe to re-enter.

**IV. SEARCH PROCEDURES**

The search for an explosive device will be conducted in the following manner:

- A. Building searches should be conducted by the personnel most familiar with the building (i.e., the occupants of the building). School Board personnel, upon request, may assist with searches at their discretion. The personnel involved in a search must be instructed not to touch, move or otherwise disturb any discovered or suspected explosive device. Police personnel will only conduct building searches if there are no building occupants to do so.
- B. All personnel in or around the building must turn off all two-way radios, cell phones, wireless computers, and any other wireless electronic communication devices. If possible, all electronically operated machines, motors, and the like should be turned off.
- C. Searchers must be aware that more than one explosive device may be present.
- D. Master keys for lockers, doors, etc. should be obtained prior to the beginning of the search.

E. Determine from personnel on the premises whether the building was found to be secure when last opened. (Note any cases of recent breaking and entering).

F. Conduct the search systematically and thoroughly, not overlooking restrooms, closets, and other seldom-used areas which could be used to conceal a bomb.

G. Do not attempt to defuse a suspected explosive device. If an explosive device is found, vacate and secure the area pending the arrival of the bomb disposal unit.

H. Continue the search only after a suspected device has been rendered safe. Do not assume that a device that is located is the only hazardous device present.

#### **V. POST-EXPLOSION PROCEDURES**

If a bomb explodes, the incident will be handled according to Index Codes 2304 and 2306, depending on the extent of injury and damage. The Fire Department will be in charge of the scene and the resulting investigation, with assistance provided by the Police Department and State Fire Marshal. The senior ranking police official on the scene will determine and declare the appropriate Alert Phase for police mobilization and response. All efforts will be made to establish a unified command with the Fire Department, State Fire Marshal, and any other agencies involved. Once the Fire Department has assumed command of the scene, the primary responsibilities of the Police Department will be crowd control and scene security. For safety reasons, only personnel who are needed at the scene should be allowed into the scene.

#### **VI. PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Due to the unique nature of school bomb threats and that the vast majority of such threats have proven to be mere attempts to disrupt school activities, the Board of Education and Police Department have established a bomb threat assessment process to help minimize such disruptions. (This course of action has been agreed upon between by the two agencies and is to be used strictly for bomb threats involving Anne Arundel County Public Schools.)

##### **A. Threat Received by School**

When the threat is received or discovered (such as a note found in school) by Board of Education personnel: The school administrator or Board of Education Security personnel will contact the commander (lieutenant) of the Special Operations Section or Special Operations Division Commander (Captain). In their absence, the on-duty shift lieutenant or District Commander will be contacted. The agency representatives will discuss the details of the threat received and determine the nature to be "Specific" or "Non-Specific". The SOS Commander will notify the Police Department Communications Section of the "Specific" or "Non-Specific" determination.

##### **B. Threat Received by Police Department**

When a bomb threat is received by the Police Department (usually the 911 Center): The Communications Section supervisor will immediately notify the SOS or SOD Commander. The SOS or SOD commander will confer with Board of Education Security personnel or the school Administrator regarding the details of the incident and determine the threat to be "Specific" or "Non-Specific". The SOS or SOD commander will notify the Communications Section of the "Specific" or "Non-Specific" determination

###### **1. Specific – A specific threat will usually include the time and place and the motivation behind the threat.**

The Communications Section will dispatch the call as a "Specific" bomb threat and notify the Fire Department of the call. A sergeant and at least two officers will respond. Based on the threat, the sergeant, school administrator and Fire Department personnel will determine the size and scope of the evacuation and search to be conducted. The sergeant will request and deploy a sufficient number of personnel to assure an orderly evacuation, establish a safety and security perimeter and prevent entry of unauthorized persons into the evacuated area. From this point on the incident will be handled and investigated in accordance with general procedures of this index code.

###### **2. Non-Specific – A non-specific threat will be missing an element of information (usually motivation).**

The Communications Section will dispatch the call as a "Non-Specific" bomb threat. A sergeant and ONE officer will respond to the scene and initiate an investigation. Unless otherwise directed by the sergeant, the Fire Department will not be notified and no other officers are to respond.

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The Department recognizes that the County Board of Education has established its own policies regarding bomb threats and explosive devices, which may conflict with Department Rules and Regulations. School board policies will be respected as far as possible. However, the ranking police official at the scene must be aware that the situation may develop to the point that the need for safety, crime scene preservation, and incident management may require police action that overrides the School Board policies.

**VII. PROPONENT UNIT:** Patrol Services Bureau.

**VIII. CANCELLATION:** This directive cancels Index Code 2310, dated 07-10-06.