



Somerville Police Department 		TYPE: GENERAL ORDER		POLICY NUMBER: 119	
		Subject: Bomb Threat/Emergency			
		Issuing Authority: David Fallon Chief of Police		Signature: 	Effective Date: April 17, 2015
				Number of Pages: Page 1 of 5	
Accreditation Standards (5th Edition)				<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revised <input type="checkbox"/> Amended	
Revision & Reissued Dates:	5/14/14	4/17/15			

Purpose

It is the purpose of this policy to provide police officers and dispatchers with a protocol for managing threatened or actual bombing incidents. This policy is designed to encompass the response, secure deployment of personnel, voluntary or involuntary evacuations, requests for specialized units or equipment, crime scene search and investigation procedures.

Bomb threats and emergencies are low frequency/high risk events, meaning that they don't occur often, but when they do, they have the potential to produce catastrophic results. Although most threats are later determined to be hoaxes, a bomb threat must be treated like a bomb emergency and handled with the utmost expediency and care. Lives are at stake.

Policy

It is the policy of the Somerville Police Department to see that all responses to bomb threats be conducted systematically, efficiently, and in a manner that gives primary consideration to the protection of life. The Somerville Police Incident Commander and the Somerville Fire Incident Commander jointly will have primary responsibility for securing the scene. The Police Incident Commander will be responsible for conducting the investigation of any bombing incident. Command will be transferred to the Fire Department should a device explode causing fire or structural damage. (See 105 All Hazards Plan for Incident Command protocols.)

The Police Incident Commander shall make them self available to assist the Fire Incident Commander. Once the scene is secure, command will be transferred back to the Police Incident Commander for a continuing criminal investigation.

Definitions

Bomb Threat: A bomb threat condition exists when an explosive device has been reported or is suspected to be at a given location.

Bomb Emergency: A bomb emergency exists when a suspected or actual explosive device has been located or has been detonated.

Incident Commander: The person designated as being in charge of the overall incident for an agency or jurisdiction.

Procedures

1. Call Taker Responsibilities

The call-taker receiving the bomb threat or warnings from callers shall document the following information using the Bomb Threat Checklist Form and perform the following actions:

- A. Keep the reporting person on the line.
- B. Identify the location of the device as precisely as possible and attempt to discover when it will be, or if it has been, detonated.
- C. Determine the type of device, what the device looks like, the type of bomb involved, the form of detonation (radio, time delay, etc.).
- D. Be alert to the exact wording of the threat, attempt to determine the sex, race, and age of the caller, attempt to identify any background noise.
- E. To facilitate the collection of information, dispatchers shall use the Bomb Threat Checklist Form.
- F. Immediately dispatch **ALL** appropriate emergency units, police, fire, EMS ambulance, indicating there is a suspected **Bomb Threat Incident**.
- G. Dispatchers shall document in the dispatch log, time-sensitive information transmitted to them such as:
 1. Command Post activity
 2. Arrival of specialized units and personnel
 3. Injuries,
 4. Arrests
 5. Changing circumstances
- H. Assignment and movement of personnel are made strictly by the on-scene Incident Commander and Fire Commander and are based exclusively on safety issues.

2. Notification Procedure

The call-taker shall notify the Shift Commander and the Patrol Supervisor immediately. Based on the circumstances of the threat, the Shift Commander shall comply with the Staff Notification Procedure and request aid from other agencies.

3. Responding Officers' Responsibilities

- A. The highest ranking officer will assume the duties of Incident Commander and notify the dispatcher of this. (See 105 All Hazards Plan for ICS protocols.)
- B. Responding units shall establish and securely maintain an inner perimeter. The perimeter will be determined based on the specifics of the information received and the location of the incident. The Incident Commander has the authority to set-up an inner perimeter based on the information that he/she has, which in many cases could be less than **500 feet**. In most cases, it is recommended that a perimeter of at least **500 feet** from the facility or area in question be established. The Incident Commander must make an independent determination of a safest perimeter based on the information available. All public safety vehicles shall be located outside the inner perimeter. Radio communications should not take place within the inner perimeter since this may detonate the device.
- C. The Police Incident Commander should select a Command Post outside the inner perimeter, establishing communications, control and objectives. Additionally, the Police Incident Commander with the Fire Commander will jointly designate one staging area for responding personnel.
- D. The incident command personnel must:
 - 1. Establish communications and control
 - 2. Identify the "kill zone"
 - 3. Establish the inner perimeter
 - 4. Establish the outer perimeter
 - 5. Establish a command post
 - 6. Establish a staging area
 - 7. Request resources
- E. It is the primary responsibility of the Police Incident Commander to maintain the safety of all affected personnel. The Incident Commander shall immediately request additional personnel, to direct and control traffic, equipment and material as needed to safely secure and maintain the integrity of the crime scene and allow for a safe and lawful search for criminal evidence or suspects.
- F. Any suspect taken into custody for any reason at the scene of a bomb threat incident, whether a device is found or not, shall be carefully and thoroughly searched before transport or booking at Headquarters.

4. Search for Explosive Devices

- A. If a device has not been located by the time emergency units arrive, the Incident Commander shall locate the building owner or manager to determine if that person will authorize an evacuation, and search of the building. The decision to evacuate and/or re-enter the building rests with the person who is in charge except in those cases where an actual or suspected device has been found. In this case, the Incident Commander may order an evacuation and expand the perimeter when necessary.

1. If the decision is made not to evacuate or search, it is the Incident Commander's responsibility to record this in his/her official police incident report.
2. If a search is conducted, those familiar with the building, such as janitors or security officers should be used. If there is nobody else to search the building, the police will conduct the search.
3. If no device is found, this does not mean that one does not exist, only that a device was not found.
4. If an actual or suspected explosive device has been detected, a safe and orderly evacuation shall be conducted regardless of the building management's authorization.

5. Located Explosive Devices

- A. If a suspicious device is located, the immediate area shall be isolated and secured by a sufficient number of personnel. Under **NO** circumstances shall Somerville Public Safety Personnel attempt to inspect, move, or disarm the device.
- B. The building shall be evacuated beyond the established **500-foot** perimeter.
- C. Most likely, the Patrol Supervisor will be the Incident Commander at the scene, until relieved by a Somerville Police Superior Officer of higher authority and experience. This person will then assume the responsibility of Incident Commander.
 1. The Incident Commander has overall responsibility for the management of all incident activity, including continuously updating the Officer-in-Charge at Headquarters, briefing investigators, and coordinating responding, specialized units as they arrive.
- D. The Shift Commander shall make Staff Notifications per the Staff Notification Policy.

6. Agency Responsibility

The Somerville Police Department shall have primary responsibility for an investigation of any bomb threats or bombing incidents.

- A. Whenever an actual or suspected device is located, the **closest** available Bomb Squad shall be notified. There are four (4) explosive ordinance teams available for call by the Somerville Police Department. They are:
 1. Cambridge Police Department 617-349-3393
 2. Massachusetts State Police 508-820-2121
 3. Boston Police Department Ops 617-343-4680
 4. Boston Police Bomb Squad 617-343-5645
 5. Transit Police 617-222-1000

- B. Additional assistance from the Somerville Fire Department, or any State or Federal agency the Incident Commander and lead investigator deem necessary or whose involvement is required by State or Federal Law shall be notified.
- C. All public and news media information shall be released through the Somerville Police Public Information Officer.

7. After Action Report

- A. At the conclusion of every incident involving the removal of an actual device, the Incident Commander or the appropriate designee shall within a reasonable amount of time, but not to exceed twenty-four (24) hours, submit an After Action Report. This report shall be reviewed for any circumstances which caused, or could have caused, injuries, security violations, or communications failures affecting public safety personnel. The After Action Report shall serve as a training format for future incidents.