
Response to Bomb Calls

407.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to assist members of the Irvine Police Department in their initial response to incidents involving explosives, explosive devices, explosion/bombing incidents or threats of such incidents. Under no circumstances should these guidelines be interpreted as compromising the safety of first responders or the public. When confronted with an incident involving explosives, safety should always be the primary consideration.

407.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Irvine Police Department to place a higher priority on the safety of persons and the public over damage or destruction to public or private property.

407.3 RECEIPT OF BOMB THREAT

Department members receiving a bomb threat should obtain as much information from the individual as reasonably possible. Every effort should be made to ask the following questions if a bomb threat is received at the Police Department:

- (a) When is the bomb going to explode?
- (b) Where is the bomb?
- (c) What kind of bomb is it?
- (d) What does it look like?
- (e) Why did you place the bomb?
- (f) What will cause the bomb to explode?
- (g) Where are you calling from?
- (h) What is your name and address?
- (i) Who are you? (This should be the last question asked to avoid provoking termination of the call).

Attempt to keep the caller on the line as long as possible and obtain expanded answers to these five basic questions. During this time, document the following:

- (a) Time of the call;
- (b) Exact words of the person as accurately as possible;
- (c) Estimated age and gender of the caller;
- (d) Speech patterns and/or accents;
- (e) Background noises.

If the bomb threat is received on a recorded line, reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that the recording is preserved in accordance with established department evidence procedures.

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The member receiving the bomb threat should ensure that the watch commander is immediately advised and informed of the details. This will enable the watch commander to ensure that the appropriate personnel are dispatched, and, as appropriate, the threatened location is given an advance warning.

407.4 GOVERNMENT FACILITY OR PROPERTY

A bomb threat targeting a government facility may require a different response based on the government agency.

407.4.1 IRVINE POLICE DEPARTMENT FACILITY

If the bomb threat is against the Irvine Police Department facility, the watch commander will direct and assign officers as required for coordinating a general building search or evacuation of the police department, as he/she deems appropriate.

407.4.2 OTHER COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL FACILITY OR PROPERTY

If the bomb threat is against a county or municipal facility within the jurisdiction of the Irvine Police Department that is not the property of this department, the appropriate agency will be promptly informed of the threat. Assistance to the other entity may be provided as the watch commander deems appropriate.

407.4.3 FEDERAL BUILDING OR PROPERTY

If the bomb threat is against a federal building or property, the Federal Protective Service should be immediately notified. The Federal Protective Service provides a uniformed law enforcement response for most facilities, which may include use of its Explosive Detector Dog teams.

If the bomb threat is against a federal government property where the Federal Protective Service is unable to provide a timely response, the appropriate facility's security or command staff should be notified.

Bomb threats against a military installation should be reported to the military police or other military security responsible for the installation.

407.5 ASSISTANCE

The watch commander should be notified when police assistance is requested. The watch commander will make the decision whether the Department will render assistance and at what level. Information and circumstances that indicate a reasonably apparent, imminent threat to the safety of either the facility or the public may require a more active approach, including police control over the facility.

Should the watch commander determine that the Department will assist or control such an incident, he/she will determine:

- (a) The appropriate level of assistance.
- (b) The plan for assistance.
- (c) Whether to evacuate and/or search the facility.

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- (d) Whether to involve facility staff in the search or evacuation of the building.
 - (a) The person in charge of the facility should be made aware of the possibility of damage to the facility as a result of a search.
 - (b) The safety of all participants is the paramount concern.
- (e) The need for additional resources, including:
 - 1. Notification and response, or standby notice, for fire and emergency medical services.

Even though a facility does not request police assistance to clear the interior of a building, based upon the circumstances and known threat, officers may be sent to the scene to evacuate other areas that could be affected by the type of threat, or for traffic and pedestrian control.

407.6 FOUND DEVICE

When handling an incident involving a suspected explosive device, the following guidelines, while not all inclusive, should be followed:

- (a) No known or suspected explosive item should be considered safe regardless of its size or apparent packaging. The Orange County Sheriff's Department Bomb Squad should be requested for assistance.
- (b) The device should not be touched or moved except by the bomb squad or military explosive ordnance disposal team.
- (c) Personnel should not transmit on any equipment that is capable of producing radio frequency energy within the evacuation area around the suspected device. This includes the following:
 - 1. Two-way radios
 - 2. Cell phones
 - 3. Other personal communication devices
- (d) The largest perimeter reasonably possible should initially be established around the device based upon available personnel and the anticipated danger zone.
- (e) A safe access route should be provided for support personnel and equipment.
- (f) Search the area for secondary devices as appropriate and based upon available resources.
- (g) Consider evacuation of buildings and personnel near the device or inside the danger zone and the safest exit route.
- (h) Promptly relay available information to the watch commander including:
 - 1. The time of discovery.
 - 2. The exact location of the device.
 - 3. A full description of the device (e.g., size, shape, markings, construction).
 - 4. The anticipated danger zone and perimeter.

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5. The areas to be evacuated or cleared.

407.7 EXPLOSION/BOMBING INCIDENTS

When an explosion has occurred, there are multitudes of considerations which may confront the responding officers. As in other catastrophic events, a rapid response may help to minimize injury to victims, minimize contamination of the scene by gathering crowds, or minimize any additional damage from fires or unstable structures.

407.7.1 CONSIDERATIONS

Officers responding to explosions, whether accidental or a criminal act, should consider the following actions:

- (a) Assess the scope of the incident, including the number of victims and extent of injuries.
- (b) Request additional personnel and resources, as appropriate.
- (c) Assist with first aid.
- (d) Identify and take appropriate precautions to mitigate scene hazards, such as collapsed structures, bloodborne pathogens and hazardous materials.
- (e) Assist with the safe evacuation of victims, if possible.
- (f) Establish an inner perimeter to include entry points and evacuation routes. Search for additional or secondary devices.
- (g) Preserve evidence.
- (h) Establish an outer perimeter and evacuate if necessary.
- (i) Identify witnesses.

407.7.2 NOTIFICATIONS

When an explosion has occurred, the following people should be notified as appropriate:

- The Orange County Fire Authority
- The Orange County Sheriff's Department Bomb Squad
- Additional department personnel, such as detectives and the Crime Scene Investigations (CSI) Unit
- Field supervisor
- Command Staff
- Other law enforcement agencies, including local, state or federal agencies, such as the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), JTTF (Joint Terrorism Task Force), OCIAC (Orange County Intelligence Assessment Center), and DHS (Department of Homeland Security)
- Other government agencies, as appropriate

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407.7.3 CROWD CONTROL

Only authorized members with a legitimate need should be permitted access to the scene. Spectators and other unauthorized individuals should be restricted to a safe distance as is reasonably practicable given the available resources and personnel.

407.7.4 PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE

As in any other crime scene, steps should immediately be taken to preserve the scene. The watch commander should assign officers to protect the crime scene area, which could extend over a long distance. Consideration should be given to the fact that evidence may be imbedded in nearby structures or hanging in trees and bushes.