

Response to Bomb Threat Calls

503.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to assist members of the Humboldt County Probation Department (HCPD) in their initial response to incidents involving explosives or 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.

503.2 POLICY

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

503.3 RECEIPT OF BOMB THREAT

Department members receiving a bomb threat should obtain as much information from the individual as reasonably possible, including the type, placement, and alleged detonation time of the device and should immediately contact the appropriate local law enforcement agency to convey the information.

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.

503.4 HCPD FACILITY

If the bomb threat is against the department facility, the member who received the threat should immediately contact the appropriate local law enforcement agency and notify the supervisor as soon as practicable. The supervisor, in coordination with local law enforcement, will direct and assign officers as required for coordinating a general building search or evacuation of the department, as deemed appropriate.

503.5 OTHER COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL FACILITY OR PROPERTY

If the bomb threat is against a county or municipal facility within the jurisdiction of the County that is not the property of this department, assistance to the other entity may be provided as the supervisor deems appropriate once the appropriate local law enforcement agency has been notified of the threat.

503.6 FEDERAL BUILDING OR PROPERTY

If the bomb threat is against a federal building or property, local law enforcement and 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.

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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 local law enforcement and the military police or other military security responsible for the installation.

503.7 PRIVATE FACILITY OR PROPERTY

When a member of this department receives notification of a bomb threat at a location, the member receiving the notification should obtain as much information as reasonably possible from the notifying individual, including:

- (a) The location of the facility.
- (b) The nature of the threat.
- (c) Whether the type and detonation time of the device is known.
- (d) Whether the facility is occupied and, if so, the number of occupants currently on-scene.
- (e) Whether the individual is requesting law enforcement assistance at the facility.
- (f) Whether any internal facility procedures exist regarding bomb threats, such as:
 - 1. No evacuation of personnel and no search for a device.
 - 2. Search for a device without evacuation of personnel.
 - 3. Evacuation of personnel without a search for a device.
 - 4. Evacuation of personnel and a search for a device.

The member receiving the bomb threat information should ensure that local law enforcement is notified. Also notify the department supervisor immediately so that the supervisor can communicate with the person in charge of the threatened facility as necessary.

503.8 ASSISTANCE

The Chief Probation Officer or the authorized designee should be notified when department assistance is requested. The Chief Probation Officer or authorized designee will make the decision whether the Department will render assistance to responding law enforcement 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 evacuation and giving officers control over the facility.

Should the Chief Probation Officer or authorized designee determine that the department will assist law enforcement with such an incident, the Chief Probation Officer or authorized designee will determine:

- (a) The appropriate level of assistance.
- (b) The plan for assistance in consultation with responding local law enforcement.
- (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.
 - 1. 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 local law enforcement's 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.

503.9 SUSPECTED 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.
- (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:
 - 1. Two-way radios.
 - 2. Cell phones.
 - 3. Other personal communication devices.
- (d) The appropriate bomb squad or military explosive ordnance disposal team should be summoned for assistance.
- (e) The largest perimeter reasonably possible should initially be established around the device based upon available personnel and the anticipated danger zone.
- (f) A safe access route should be provided for support personnel and equipment.
- (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 local law enforcement and the Chief Probation Officer or authorized designee 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.
 - 5. The areas to be evacuated or cleared.

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503.10 EXPLOSION/BOMBING INCIDENTS

When an explosion has occurred, the supervisor may be confronted with a multitude of considerations. As in other catastrophic events, a rapid evacuation may help to minimize injury to victims, contamination of the scene, or any additional damage from fires or unstable structures.

503.10.1 CONSIDERATIONS

Officers present at the scene of an explosion, 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, where safe and practicable.
- (b) Request through 9-1-1 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, where safe and practicable.
- (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 only if trained to do so or where necessary to establish an evacuation route for self and others.
- (g) Preserve evidence, where safe and practicable.
- (h) Establish an outer perimeter and evacuate, if necessary.
- (i) Identify witnesses.

503.10.2 NOTIFICATIONS

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

- Local law enforcement
- Supervisor
- Fire department
- Bomb squad
- Additional department personnel, as necessary
- Other government agencies, as appropriate

503.11 CROWD CONTROL

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

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503.11 PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE

As in any other crime scene, steps should immediately be taken to preserve the scene. Pending the arrival of local law enforcement, the supervisor should assign officers to protect the crime scene area, which could extend over a long distance. Consideration should be given to the fact evidence may be embedded in nearby structures or hanging in trees and bushes.