

YORK-POQUOSON SHERIFF'S OFFICE	GENERAL ORDERS
SUBJECT: Bomb Incidents	NUMBER: GO 2-25
EFFECTIVE DATE: February 19, 2019	REVIEW DATE: January 8, 2019
AMENDS/SUPERSEDES: GO 2-25, January 1, 2002	APPROVED:  Sheriff
VLEPSC: OPR.05.01	

1 **INDEX WORDS**

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3 Bombs
4 Responsibilities of persons taking calls (Bomb threats)
5 Explosions
6 Evacuation Distances
7 Searches (for bombs)

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9 **POLICY**

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11 Bomb threats and actual bomb emergencies present a serious threat to deputies, the public, and
12 property. Recently, more bombings of public and private buildings have occurred in the United
13 States than at any time this century. Law enforcement must be able to respond effectively to all
14 bomb threats to ensure the public safety. Additionally, deputies must be able to properly investigate
15 bomb threat/bomb emergencies in order to apprehend those responsible. Deputies shall display
16 caution when responding and arriving on any bomb call: the operational procedures that follow the
17 discovery of a possible bomb or incendiary device are extremely dangerous.

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19 **PURPOSE**

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21 The purpose of this order is to establish procedures for handling bomb threats and/or actual bomb
22 emergencies where actual or suspected devices are found.

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24 **PROCEDURES**

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- Initial response
 - The on-scene supervisor shall have the authority to implement this plan and shall assume command of the law enforcement operation until relieved by the Sheriff or his designee.
 - Bomb threats may be investigated by patrol deputies or investigators, while actual bombings shall require the assignment of investigative personnel.
 - The on-scene supervisor may call out investigators if the bomb threat is linked to other major crimes or otherwise requires an extensive investigation.
 - Other agencies
 - If a possible non-military explosive device is located, contact:
 - The Peninsula Bomb Squad through the Newport News Fire Department, or
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- The Virginia State Police Bomb Squad if time constraints permit.
 - The Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit may also be utilized if needed.
 - For removal of any identified military chemical or explosive device, contact the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Unit at the Yorktown Naval Weapons Station.
- Contact the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) if a bombing or explosion has occurred.
 - Bombing incidents on federal installations shall be investigated by the FBI.
- Duties and responsibilities of persons taking bomb threat calls
 - The duties and responsibilities of any person receiving a bomb threat/bomb emergency call include the following:
 - Obtain as much information as possible such as:
 - ❖ The bombs exact location;
 - ❖ The time set for detonation;
 - ❖ A description of the bomb;
 - ❖ The type of explosive or bomb; and
 - ❖ The reason for the bombing.
 - ❖ The age, sex, and attitude of the caller.
 - ❖ Any peculiar speech accent or other characteristic.
 - ❖ Any distinguishing sound or background noise.
 - ❖ The telephone number including the extension that was called.
 - Sheriff's Office employees shall immediately contact the 911 Emergency Communications Center upon receiving a bomb threat.
 - Dispatchers shall respond all identified and/or requested resources and make notifications per 911 Emergency Communications Center policy.
- Duties and responsibilities of the first arriving personnel
 - The primary responding deputy should meet with the person responsible for the building or property.
 - Additionally, the deputy should inform that person of the York County Sheriff's Office policy on bomb threats, including management's responsibility to decide on evacuating or searching the building and providing employee search assistance.
- Duties and responsibilities of the on-duty supervisor
 - Upon notification by the dispatcher, the on-duty supervisor shall respond immediately to the scene.
 - Upon arrival, the supervisor shall perform the following procedures as required depending on the actual situation:
 - Assess the situation and make a determination to notify command personnel, investigators, or other agencies.
 - Determine if a call back of additional deputies is necessary.

- 82 ▪ Determine what outside agencies shall be notified or whose assistance must be
83 requested.
84 ▪ Instruct deputies on controlling traffic in the general area.
85 ▪ Establish a security perimeter around the scene.
86 ▪ Coordinate the tasks of arriving outside agencies.
87 ▪ Ensure that an incident report is completed.
88
- 89 • Duties and responsibilities of investigator
- 90 ○ Upon arrival at the scene, investigator(s) shall:
- 91 ▪ Consult with the on-scene commander and initiate the investigation and crime scene
92 functions as directed.
93 ▪ Investigator(s) shall ensure that the person who received the original call is
94 interviewed.
- 95 ❖ All details, shall be documented such as:
- 96 ➤ The caller's voice,
97 ➤ Mannerisms, background noises, and
98 ➤ The time.
- 99
- 100 ❖ The time the call was received is important since many bombs are activated by a
101 watch or clock that restricts the bomber to a 12-hour period or less.
102 ❖ The tape recording of the bomb call, should be checked and played back, if one
103 is available.
- 104
- 105 ▪ If an actual explosion has occurred, detailed investigation and crime scene
106 processing may be delayed until the arrival of any required or needed agencies (e.g.,
107 state police, ATF, FBI).
108 ▪ Additional manpower for crime scene processing and/or investigation is available
109 from the Tidewater Regional Arson Panel (TRAP).
110
- 111 • Evacuation
- 112 ○ Upon receipt of a bomb threat, the building management must make the final decision
113 to evacuate.
- 114 ○ The role of law enforcement is to provide information, which management officials may
115 use in making the evacuation decision.
- 116 ○ If the decision is made to evacuate the building, deputies may assist in the process.
- 117 ○ If a building search reveals an explosive device, the on-scene supervisor shall order and
118 organize the evacuation of the building.
- 119 ○ In the event an actual device is located, there is a very real possibility there may be
120 secondary devices in and around the building.
- 121 ○ All persons shall be evacuated to a minimum safe distance, in accordance with [Counter](#)
122 [Terrorism Guide for Public Safety Personnel](#), from the bomb scene.
- 123 ○ Mandatory Evacuation Distances listed are related to blast pressure effects from an open
124 air blast.
- 125 ○ Preferred Evacuation Distances listed are related to fragmentation effects from an open
126 air blast.

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- Due to blast pressure effects, there are no minimum safe distances within a building where a device is located.
- Elevators shall not be used during evacuation.
- The on-scene supervisor shall set up a perimeter around the bomb scene and shall prevent anyone from entering until bomb technicians have removed or made safe the device.
- Searching the premises
 - The decision to search a building is also a management decision, with the on-scene supervisor providing only recommendations.

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- Since building employees are most familiar with the building and the space therein, part of the building management’s responsibility includes providing search personnel that may be assisted by sheriff/fire personnel or explosive canine teams when available.
 - Explosive Detection canine teams can be obtained from the State Police or other regional agencies.
 - When the decision to search has been made, the on-scene supervisor may designate search team(s) as needed, depending on the size of the area to be searched.
 - If Sheriff’s Office personnel are involved in the search, supervisors should assist in coordinating the search to avoid repetition.
 - A floor plan of the building should be obtained and made available for immediate reference, if possible.
 - Care shall be exercised to impress upon all searchers the importance of not disturbing any suspected bomb that may be located.
 - All areas open to the public shall be given special attention first, such as:
 - Restrooms,
 - Trash receptacles,
 - Stairwells,
 - Elevator shafts,
 - Mechanical rooms,
 - Fire extinguisher cabinets, and
 - Supply closets.
 - Custodians shall be directed by their own supervisors, with law-enforcement assistance, to check their closets and storage areas for any unusual objects, and supervisors shall ask their subordinates to check their work areas for unusual objects.
 - Nothing shall be done to change the environment of the area searched, such as turning on light switches or thermostats until the area has been searched thoroughly.
 - Never tell management personnel that the building does not contain explosive devices or that the building or area is safe.
 - Tell them that the search revealed nothing, but let them make any decisions concerning re-occupation of the building.
 - If a search reveals an unusual device or bomb, deputies shall not disarm or move it in any manner.
 - The explosive device may contain an anti-disturbance device and should be approached only by explosive experts.
 - The main concern is to safeguard lives by isolating the area.
 - If a suspected bomb is found, a request shall be made to contact one of the designated bomb squads.
 - A bomb disposal team shall respond to handle the device with all necessary equipment to make it safe and remove it or destroy it.
- If an explosion occurs
 - The on-scene supervisor shall seal off and protect the area until investigative personnel arrive to begin scene processing.

- 215 ○ Deputies shall attend to injured persons within their scope of training.
216 ○ The on-scene supervisor shall allow only emergency equipment and necessary personnel
217 to enter the scene.
218 ○ With the exception of investigators and other necessary emergency personnel, no others
219 shall be permitted to enter the scene.
220 ○ The on-scene supervisor and all arriving personnel shall assume that there are secondary
221 devices that could be detonated and shall take all precautions involved.
222 ○ All arriving personnel from other agencies should be advised of this possibility.
223 ○ Because fragments from an exploded device as well as blast residue will be required as
224 evidence to identify and reconstruct the device, investigators should be prepared to
225 respond to medical facilities where victims of the explosion are transported to recover
226 the following:
227 ▪ Device fragments removed from victims,
228 ▪ Clothing worn by the victims.
229
230 ○ Only personnel trained in or under the supervision of someone trained in blast
231 investigations shall process bombing crime scenes.
232
233 • Reporting
234 ○ The on-duty supervisor shall coordinate all reporting.
235 ○ The initial responding deputy shall complete an incident report and all other deputies
236 shall complete supplements as required.
237 ○ The Sheriff's Office on-scene commander shall complete a chronology of the incident
238 as soon as possible and provide it to the Sheriff or PIO to facilitate the rapid release of
239 information to the news media.
240 ○ The Sheriff's Office on-scene commander shall complete an after-action report and shall
241 forward it to the Sheriff through the chain of command, giving a chronology of the
242 incident and offering recommendations, if appropriate for all major explosive incidents.