Asheville Police Department Policy Manual

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1101 - Hazardous Devices Team

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Introduction

The Asheville Police Department is committed to maintaining a team of highly trained technicians who follow established guidelines to provide the safest possible resolution to incidents involving explosives, improvised explosive devices, and other related incidents involving potentially explosive materials.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Asheville Police Department (APD) to maintain, train, and equip specialized units within the department, and to provide guidelines to maximize operational efficiency and safety. This policy provides guidelines for the organization, administration, and utilization of the Bomb Squad.

Definitions

Public Safety Bomb Technician: a sworn officer who has successfully graduated from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Hazardous Devices School and holds current FBI bomb technician certification.

Bomb Threat: a written, verbal, telephonic, or electronic communication that announces the placement or presence of an explosive device in a specified or unspecified location.

Hazardous Device: a device which, when assembled or placed, is capable of causing bodily injury or damage to property by the action of any person making contact with such a device subsequent to the assembly or placement.

Rules and Procedures

1101.1 Squad Mission and Responsibilities

A. The Bomb Squad is established to assist in the resolution, including, but not limited to, the following types of situations:

    1. Situations in which an item, suspicious in nature, may pose a potentially explosive or hazardous threat to life and/or property.

    2. Situations where hazardous devices or booby traps are known or believed to be present.

    3. Situations involving any type of explosive device, manufactured, improvised, or any type of military ordnance that is a potential safety hazard and represents a threat to life and/or property.

    4. Any situation where one of the following represents a threat to life or property:

        a. Device(s) used for the purpose of igniting or causing a fire;

        b. A chemical or compound that possesses explosive properties, and/or

        c. Pyrotechnics, fireworks, or ammunition that require special handling.

    5. Emergency Response Team operations in which the Bomb Squad would provide explosive security, breaching, robotic operations, and any special assignment deemed appropriate and approved by the chief of police or designee.

6. The investigation of any situation in which an explosive or incendiary device, a weapon of mass destruction, or any hazardous device has been used or may be used, including an incident in which an explosion or fire occurs and investigative assistance is requested.

1101.2 Squad Organization

A. The Bomb Squad is led by the Bomb Squad commander, as appointed by the chief of police. The Bomb Squad commander is responsible for the squad's daily operational and administrative functions. The Bomb Squad commander must be certified as a bomb technician.

B. In the commander's absence, the team leader will carry out the commander's duties and responsibilities.

C. The Bomb Squad commander reports to the Patrol Operations Division commander. Team administrative reports or issues will be submitted through the Patrol Executive Officer as required by this policy or as directed by the Patrol Operations Division commander.

D. The Bomb Squad commander is responsible for the following:

1. Ensuring mandatory and approved training is conducted and attended by team members.

2. Maintaining a six-month training schedule to be distributed to all team members and their supervisors to minimize scheduling conflicts for other mandatory training.

3. Monitoring APD’s explosives magazine to include security, inventory, and accountability.

4. Tracking and ensuring each team member has the necessary and appropriate equipment. [46.2.3]

5. Maintaining an adequate number of Technicians to meet current manning certification standards of the National Association of Bomb Squad Commanders Advisory Board (NABSCAB).

E. The chief of police retains full authority over the selection and removal of personnel assigned to the Bomb Squad.

1101.3 Member Selection Process

A. To be considered eligible to participate in the Hazardous Devices Technician Certification selection process, officers must meet, at a minimum, the following criteria: [46.2.2]

   1. Meet FBI, NABSCAB, and U.S. Bomb Data Center application requirements.
   2. Be able to operate oversized vehicles safely.
   3. Be able to perform activities requiring manual dexterity.
   4. Be able to perform activities in confined spaces.
   5. Not have any conflicting duties, including current assignment to the Emergency Response Team, Crisis Negotiation Team, Crowd Control Team, or as a patrol canine handler.
   6. Receive a favorable endorsement by each supervisor in the officer's chain of command, including a review of the officer's personnel file.

B. Additional requirements may be outlined in the selection process announcement.

C. Hazardous Devices Technician certification selection processes will be announced to all sworn officers by the Training and Career Development Section.

D. Once eligibility to participate is determined, the selection process will include, at a minimum, a panel interview, a physical examination, and a physical assessment test. [46.2.2]

E. Once the process is complete, the Training and Career Development Section will submit a banded list to the chief of police for review and final selection(s).

F. Each new team member will submit to a psychological screening conducted by a psychologist or psychiatrist licensed in North Carolina. The choice of psychologist or psychiatrist is at the department's discretion. [46.2.2]

G. After selection and before attending the FBI Hazardous Devices School, the officer must pass an FBI medical examination and obtain a security clearance to remain eligible for the position. [46.2.2]

1101.4 Training

A. Each prospective bomb technician must complete a Hazardous Materials Technician certification course or similar approved training lasting no less than forty (40) hours before application to the FBI's Hazardous Devices School.

B. Each prospective Public Safety Bomb Technician must apply to and satisfactorily complete the FBI's Hazardous Devices School to remain on the squad [33.6.1 a] [2.08]

C. Training sessions are considered a duty for Bomb Squad members, who will be excused from their regularly assigned units to attend mandatory training whenever possible.

D. A minimum of sixteen (16) hours of training per month is required for all certified bomb technicians. Certified and prospective squad members must attend at least 80% of scheduled squad training sessions. [33.6.1 c] [33.6.2] [2.08]

E. Annually, certified squad members will:

1. Complete a minimum of one training course of forty (40) or more hours related to hands-on explosives, hazardous devices, or hazardous materials to comply with federal standards. [33.6.2]

2. Complete the North Carolina Police Officer Physical Abilities Test (POPAT) to meet current state standards.

F. Each certified Public Safety Bomb Technician must attend the FBI Hazardous Devices School refresher course every three (3) years. An application for recertification must be made before the certification expires. [33.6.1 b]

G. Every three (3) years between recertifications, each technician should participate in at least one advanced training program related to hazardous device response.

H. Each technician will maintain an active membership in a professional association, such as the International Association of Bomb Technicians and Investigators (IABTI) or the United States Bomb Technicians' Association (USBTA), to stay current with industry trends and changes.

I. Squad training will be documented in activity reports submitted to the U.S. Bomb Data Center and updated before next month's training date. Copies of all training activity reports will be forwarded to the Patrol Executive Officer annually.

J. The Bomb Squad commander will maintain all training records for inspection by the Patrol Operations Division commander and/or the Operations Bureau commander.

1101.5 Equipment

A. Equipment will be maintained in working condition. Shortages and equipment malfunctions will be reported immediately to the Bomb Squad commander or the Patrol Executive Officer.

B. The Bomb Squad commander will provide recommendations on the necessary specialized equipment. Equipment issued to every HDT member will include, at a minimum: [46.2.3]

    1. Ballistic eye protection.
    2. Fire-resistant clothing that presents a low likelihood of generating a static charge.
    3. An EOD-specific multi-tool that has at a minimum: pliers, primer punch, wire cutter, and cap crimper.
    4. Heat-resistant gloves.
    5. An AVON gas mask.

C. The Bomb Squad commander or designee must maintain an equipment database to include all squad equipment.

D. The Patrol Operations Division commander and Operations Bureau commander must approve team-issued equipment and uniforms.

E. An up-to-date and accurate log must be maintained for all explosives and munitions in stock or in storage.

F. Records of yearly fit testing for each squad member’s issued AVON gas mask will be maintained by the Training and Career Development Section.

1101.6 Squad Vehicles

A. The Bomb Squad has special-purpose vehicles specifically assigned for team use at agency emergency response missions, training missions, and other approved special events. [41.1.3 a]

B. Only designated Bomb Squad members will be allowed to operate the response vehicle or have unrestricted access to the interiors. [41.1.3 b]

C. Bomb Squad members must keep the response vehicle in a state of readiness, ensuring it is fueled and prepared for immediate use. [41.1.3 c]

D. All Bomb Squad members are responsible for keeping Bomb Squad response vehicles in working order.

E. Bomb Squad members will maintain no less than one primary Bomb Squad response vehicle equipped, at a minimum, with the following: [41.1.3 d]

1. Mid to large-sized bomb disposal robot.
2. Computerized radiography type X-ray.
3. Demolition equipment.
4. Day boxes and a cap box.
5. Two 16” disruptors and various explosive tools.
6. EOD10 bomb suit(s).
7. Hand tools.

F. The Bomb Squad may maintain secondary response vehicles, which will be equipped, at a minimum, with the following:

1. One or more 9-16” disruptor(s) and various explosive tools.
2. Demolition equipment.
3. Day box and cap box.
4. EOD10 bomb suit or Armor appropriate for conducting a search.
5. Hand tools.

1101.7 Explosives

A. The Bomb Squad commander will be responsible for the security and accountability of APD-held explosives and may designate a limited number of officers to have access to these explosives for training, investigative, or operational purposes. Only Public Safety Bomb Technicians will have access to the APD magazine containing explosives.

B. Bomb Squad members will follow all Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (BATF&E) and FBI guidelines when requesting and storing explosive materials.

C. The Bomb Squad commander must ensure that the magazine is inventoried in accordance with all applicable Federal and BATF&E guidelines. Homemade

explosives or commercial primary explosives may not, under any circumstances, be stored within APD's explosives magazine. [84.1.4]

D. Explosives for operational or investigative purposes will be obtained from established commercial explosives vendors.

E. Per BATF&E guidelines, Bomb Squad members who maintain a secondary response vehicle may keep a small cache of explosives not to exceed ten (10) pounds for the purpose of rapid response while on-call. This cache must be stored within a secure day box in a locked vehicle vault.

F. When not in use for training, investigative, or operational purposes, the explosives will be secured in a day box either in a lockable compartment of a response vehicle or in a vault in the trunk of the primary or secondary response vehicle.

1101.8 Bomb Squad Activation

A. The Bomb Squad's operational considerations for each activation will be based on the following priorities:

1. Public safety.
2. Safety of officers on the scene (including the bomb technician).
3. Protection and preservation of public and private property.
4. The collection and preservation of evidence.
5. The restoration of public services.

B. The basic principles for responding to all calls will consist of the following:

1. Public Safety Bomb Technicians are not to 'hand enter' pipe bombs.
2. A Bomb Squad operation must include two (2) certified Public Safety Bomb Technicians with essential safety equipment.
3. Only Public Safety Bomb Technicians, or those requested by the on-scene commander, will be permitted within the bomb disposal operation perimeter.
4. Scene security and maintenance of the operation perimeter must be provided for the bomb technicians during an operation.

5. Paramedics and emergency fire personnel should be present when the Bomb Squad responds to the scene of a suspicious item that requires the use of the bomb suit or is deemed a life-threatening situation.

6. Per the FBI and NABSCAB best-practice guidelines, video recording of techniques, tactics, and procedures used by Public Safety Bomb Technicians during down-range operations is prohibited. This includes the use of body-worn cameras affixed to Technicians while physically downrange, as well as cameras used to record robot operations.

C. The Bomb Squad will not be requested to respond to locations involved in a bomb threat where no suspicious package or hazardous device has been located; however, the incident commander will request that bomb technicians search the location if there is reason to believe it has been booby-trapped.

D. In a situation requiring immediate attention (e.g., finding explosives, a suspected explosive device, or a post-blast incident), the watch commander may place the Bomb Squad on standby. The Patrol Operations Division commander or designee must approve the activation of the Bomb Squad. [46.2.1 c]

E. Situations with sufficient time to prepare for the event are considered planned deployments. Examples of these events include VIP/Dignitary protection, special assignments, planned emergency response team deployments, or other events. [46.2.1 b,c]

1. Should a supervisor deem it necessary to request Bomb Squad support for such an operation, a request should be submitted to the team commander and Patrol Executive Officer for consideration.

2. Where practical, the Bomb Squad commander will be notified by the requesting supervisor at least twenty-four (24) hours before the planned deployment.

3. During an operation, Public Safety Bomb Technicians, whose primary event assignment is as a bomb technician, will not be utilized for secondary duties such as crowd or traffic control to ensure their immediate availability.

F. Mutual aid requests involving the Bomb Squad will follow Policy 400 - Authority, Jurisdiction, and Mutual Aid.

1101.9 Operations and Documentation

A. Upon arrival at a scene, Bomb Squad members will comply with the established incident command structure. The incident commander will ensure coordination and cooperation between all activated tactical teams and other operational components at the scene. [46.2.1 d,f]

B. At the conclusion of an operation, team members will ensure that all equipment has been accounted for and properly stored. A debriefing will be conducted as soon as practical.

C. After every activation involving a viable device, hoax device, live ordinance, or the disposal of more than five (5) pounds of energetic materials, a department after-action report will be completed and submitted to the Patrol Executive Officer to be forwarded to the Division and Bureau commanders; see SOP 3002 - Blue Team Reports.

D. All incidents and activities must be forwarded by the primary technician on the scene to the U.S. Bomb Data Center within 48 hours. These reports will be maintained by the Bomb Arson Tracking System (BATS) account manager and forwarded to the Patrol Operations Division commander and Operations Bureau commander at the end of each calendar year.

E. BATS reports will be made available to all bomb technicians, the Patrol Executive Officer, division commanders, bureau commanders, and the chief of police. Relevant investigators will be granted access should the case require follow-up.

By order of:



Jackie Stepp
Interim Chief of Police