



## Policy 707

Subject

# **BOMB THREAT OR SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE – CALL FOR SERVICE**

Date Published

**4 October 2016**

Page

**1 of 5**

*By Order of the Police Commissioner*

### **POLICY**

It is the policy of the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) to respond and investigate all bomb threat or suspicious package calls for service. This Policy provides general guidance applicable to the safe handling of bomb threat and suspicious package calls for service and applies to all members of the BPD and any personnel attached to, detailed to, or working in conjunction with the BPD.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Bomb Threat** – A threat that exists when an explosive device has been reported or is suspected to be at a given location.

**Destructive Device** – Pursuant to Title 18 USC 921 (4), the term “destructive device” means:

1. Any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas - (i) bomb, (ii) grenade, (iii) rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, (iv) missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, (v) mine, or (vi) device similar to any of the devices described in the preceding clauses;
2. Any type of weapon (other than a shotgun or a shotgun shell which the Attorney General finds is generally recognized as particularly suitable for sporting purposes) by whatever name known which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than one-half inch in diameter; and;
3. Any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.

**NOTE:** The term “destructive device” shall not include any device which is neither designed nor redesigned for use as a weapon; any device, although originally designed for use as a weapon, which is redesigned for use as a signaling, pyrotechnic, line throwing, safety, or similar device; surplus ordnance sold, loaned, or given by the Secretary of the Army pursuant to the provisions of section 4684 (2), 4685, or 4686 of title 10; or any other device which the Attorney General finds is not likely to be used as a weapon, is an antique, or is a rifle which the owner intends to use solely for sporting, recreational or cultural purposes.

**Evacuation Distances** – Minimum distances for evacuation of persons. See FBI/DHS Bomb Threat Stand-Off Chart (see Appendix A).

**Improvised Explosive Device (IED)** – A “homemade” bomb/device that is designed to cause injury or damage using explosives, chemicals, flammable materials and/or ordnance components.

**Render Safe Procedures (RSP)** – That portion of improvised explosive device disposal procedures which involves the application of special disposal tools and methods to provide for the interruption of functions or separation of essential components of improvised explosive devices in order to prevent detonation.

**Secondary Device** – An additional device emplaced in the target area to attack individuals (often public safety personnel/first responders) or vehicles after the initial event.

**Suspicious Package** – A package that has been identified as potentially containing explosives, such as an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) or other hazardous material that requires bomb technician skills and equipment to further evaluate.

## **GENERAL**

Knowing or ascertaining the difference between a suspicious package and an unattended package remains a challenging distinction. A first responding officer should gather as much information regarding the incident as possible, retain and interview witnesses, contain the scene, establish a perimeter and attempt to resolve the situation by identifying the person exercising control of the suspicious item. An item is not suspicious simply because someone left it behind. It could have been inadvertently left, stashed for later retrieval, etc. An unattended item should have some “plus” factor that makes it suspicious. A few examples are items which:

1. Do not belong in that location.
2. Are hidden in an out-of-the-way place that is not readily visible.
3. Matches something described in a reported threat or has a threatening note attached.
4. Have visible wires, batteries, a clock or timer, bottles, tanks, or bags attached.
5. Are abandoned by someone quickly leaving the area.
6. Emits odor, mist or oily liquid, or leaks a powdery substance.

## **REQUIRED ACTION**

### **Member**

#### **Bomb Threat / Suspicious Package – Call for Service**

1. Respond to the call maintaining a minimum safe distance when parking. Be guided by the “Bomb Threat Stand-off Chart” (see Appendix A).
2. Do not utilize the police radio. Establish communications via wired or cellular telephone if needed.

3. Conduct an initial, preliminary investigation.
4. Locate the owner, owner's agent, manager, or person in charge and advise them of the following:
  - 4.1. Evacuation orders must be the decision and responsibility of the owner/agent. BPD personnel are not authorized to order an evacuation, conduct any search, or furnish any materials for use in search. However, BPD personnel can advise and counsel.
  - 4.2. The search of the premises must be conducted or directed by the owner/agent. Maintenance and janitorial personnel are generally excellent for this purpose as they are thoroughly familiar with the premises and should quickly recognize foreign or out-of-place objects.
5. If a suspicious item (including apparent IED, suspected IED, explosive material(s), unknown chemicals or substances) is located, under no circumstances should it be moved or touched.
  - 5.1. Once a suspicious item is located during the search, assume control of the incident. Be mindful that a secondary device may exist.
  - 5.2. Notify Communications by phone that a suspicious item has been located during the search and request the assistance of a bomb technician, the fire department and EMS.
  - 5.3. Establish a perimeter a safe distance away from the suspicious item. Do not allow non-essential personnel inside of the perimeter.
  - 5.4. Begin the evacuation of the building or area.
  - 5.5. Establish a command post. Ensure the command post and any rally points for evacuated persons are a safe distance from the threat/item.
  - 5.6. When the scene is clear, complete a Crime Incident Report titled "Suspicious Package" or "Bomb Threat."

NOTE: Unfounded incidents also require a Crime Incident Report.

### **Bomb Technician**

1. When requested to the location of a suspicious package, IED or destructive device, respond and take responsibility for the package or device.
2. Notify the Arson Unit if an explosive or incendiary device is located.
3. Conduct operations in accordance with the BPD Bomb Squad Standard Operating Procedures and FBI Hazardous Device School Guidelines to render the item safe.
4. Advise the primary unit when the scene is rendered safe.

**Communications Section**

1. Do not broadcast a “Bomb Threat” or “Suspicious Package” call for service via the police radio.
2. Advise the primary unit and the sector supervisor to contact the Communications Section via telephone to receive the nature and details of the call.

**Arson Unit**

1. Thoroughly investigate all incidents where an explosive or incendiary device is found intact or detonated.
2. Maintain the integrity of the evidence in the chain of custody.

**Crime Scene Unit**

1. Process all scenes where explosive or incendiary devices are found intact or detonated, at the direction of the Arson Unit.

**Supervisor**

1. Respond to all Bomb Threat/Suspicious Package calls for service with the primary unit.
2. Provide assistance to members of the public and members of the BPD to safely resolve the incident.
3. Ensure that the incident is properly reported.

**ASSOCIATED POLICIES**

Policy 702, *Barricade, Sniper, and Hostage Incidents*  
Policy 706, *Hazardous Material Incidents*  
Policy 721, *Arson Investigations*

**RESCISSION**

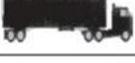
Remove and destroy/recycle General Order G-7, *Bomb or Bomb Threat – Call for service*, dated 24 May 1991.

**COMMUNICATION OF POLICY**

This policy is effective on the date listed herein. Each employee is responsible for complying with the contents of this policy.

**APPENDIX A**

## Bomb Threat Stand-off Chart

 <b>BOMB THREAT STAND-OFF CHART</b>			
Threat Description Improvised Explosive Device (IED)	Explosives Capacity <sup>1</sup> (TNT Equivalent)	Building Evacuation Distance <sup>2</sup>	Outdoor Evacuation Distance <sup>3</sup>
 Pipe Bomb	5 LBS	70 FT	1200 FT
 Suicide Bomber	20 LBS	110 FT	1700 FT
 Briefcase/Suitcase	50 LBS	150 FT	1850 FT
 Car	500 LBS	320 FT	1500 FT
 SUV/Van	1,000 LBS	400 FT	2400 FT
 Small Moving Van/ Delivery Truck	4,000 LBS	640 FT	3800 FT
 Moving Van/ Water Truck	10,000 LBS	860 FT	5100 FT
 Semi-Trailer	60,000 LBS	1570 FT	9300 FT

1. These capacities are based on the maximum weight of explosive material that could reasonably fit in a container of similar size.

2. Personnel in buildings are provided a high degree of protection from death or serious injury; however, glass breakage and building debris may still cause some injuries. Unstrengthened buildings can be expected to sustain damage that approximates five percent of their replacement cost.

3. If personnel cannot enter a building to seek shelter they must evacuate to the minimum distance recommended by Outdoor Evacuation Distance. These distance is governed by the greater hazard of fragmentation distance, glass breakage or threshold for ear drum rupture.