



GENERAL ORDER

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

Chapter: Operations **Section:** 412.13

Subject: Court Security/Civil Process **Topic:** Bomb Threat/Emergency in Court Complex

Accreditation: ADM. 24.06, 24.07, OPR. 11.01 **Revised:** **Reaffirmed:**

Enacted: 07/30/2015 **Last Review:** 07/24/2015 **Review:** 07/30/2016

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to prescribe specific actions to be taken in the event of the following situations:

- A. A verbal or written threat is received indicating that a bomb has been planted in the court complex or immediate vicinity
- B. An object is discovered in or adjacent to the court complex, which is suspected of being, or actually is, a bomb or explosive device

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office to consider the safety and welfare of all persons in the vicinity of the courthouse complex the primary focus of concern during a bomb threat or other emergency event. After the safety of all persons has been ensured, secondary consideration will be given to the location, disarmament, and disposal of any suspected bomb. This policy does not replace the procedures followed in General Order 406.7, Response to Bomb Threats and Incidents. General Order 406.7 complements and provides further guidance to this policy.

III. PROCEDURE

- A. Upon assignment to a bomb threat or the discovery of a suspected bomb or other emergency event, the assigned deputy(s) should respond to the target location to make an assessment of conditions in the immediate vicinity and to prevent the situation from worsening until the arrival of a shift supervisor.
- B. The deputy should begin questioning the person who received the threat or located the suspected device as per procedures listed in General Order 406.7, III, A, 2, a – h.
- C. The deputy should ensure immediate notification of the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) by telephone. Ensure command staff personnel are notified through ECC. Evaluate the need for assistance from Leesburg Police Department personnel. The use of two-way radios within the target area is prohibited until the area has been cleared of any suspected device.
- D. Initial responsibilities of the Court Security Section Supervisor
 - 1. Respond to the location and assess the conditions.

2. Designate and establish the command post. Announcement to other personnel of the location of the command post should either be made by telephone to the ECC or by moving two or more blocks away from the scene before using the law enforcement radio. At the discretion of the supervisor, this post may be inside the threatened building or at a reasonable distance away. All responding personnel must report to this post for assignment. At this time, the supervisor shall decide whether to request higher-ranking authority for assistance.
3. All communications activity is to be performed by the command post. Radios will not be used until such time as any bomb device has been located and it has been determined that the detonator cannot be activated by radio.
4. The Loudoun County Bomb Squad should be contacted only if a suspected bomb has been located or an explosion has occurred. The Loudoun County Bomb Squad should not be summoned to the scene or contacted about a bomb threat unless a bomb has actually been located. If the Loudoun County Bomb Squad is not available the Virginia State Police Arson Bureau bomb technicians will be contacted.
5. If needed, the supervisor should attempt to establish immediate contact with the person(s) who has primary knowledge of a building or area of search (e.g., court clerk, judge, building maintenance, etc.). All activity should be coordinated with this individual.
6. Restrict entry to the court complex to all but authorized personnel for the duration of the emergency.
7. In the event a bomb threat is made during normal working hours, an order for an evacuation of the court complex may be made based on the totality of the circumstances. The presiding judge may provide input.
8. In the event an actual bomb is discovered during normal working hours, Sheriff's Office personnel will, in all cases, order an immediate evacuation. Follow the procedures for evacuation as listed in Section III, G of this General Order as well as General Order 406.7.

E. Bomb Search

1. Prior to the opening of court:
 - a. Search teams, consisting of at least two members, will be comprised of existing court personnel. The command post leader will appoint teams and team leaders to conduct searches in their respective areas of responsibility. Probable places for bombs would be in areas frequented

by the public to include the rest rooms, janitor's closets, and electrical rooms. Courtrooms will be thoroughly and systematically searched.

- b. Court bailiffs will conduct searches of clerical offices with the assistance of clerical staff and/or judges who are familiar with their respective office areas.

2. During court:

- a. When courts are in session and the building is not evacuated, search teams consisting of bailiffs and corrections or patrol deputies will conduct a floor to floor search as described above.

F. Adult Detention Center staff should:

1. Be prepared to assist with the return of prisoners from court should this action be directed.
2. Suspend telephone and radio communication with the court complex for the duration of the emergency unless otherwise directed.
3. Be prepared to make space available for the command post.
4. Be prepared to dispatch a member of the ADC staff to the command post.

G. Discovery of an Actual or Suspected Bomb

The Command Post Team Leader shall:

1. Alert all personnel in the court complex. Due to the fact that a bomb or explosive device may be electronically controlled, it should be remembered that activation of any electrical device could set off a bomb. Therefore, any order to evacuate should preferably be given verbally or by a portable public address system and not by a fire alarm system or other internal system.
2. Proceed with the building evacuation. All persons should be evacuated from above, below, and on the immediate sides of the device. Elevators should not be used.
3. Ensure immediate notification of the Emergency Communications Center and request response from the fire/rescue services to the scene. Have standby equipment respond with their radio off to the target area. Be prepared to brief fire/rescue services on their arrival.
4. Ensure notification of the Virginia State Police bomb technicians. The bomb technicians are members of the State Police Arson Bureau and are assigned on

a full time basis to the Northern Virginia Region. Our ECC has the bomb technicians' number on file. If the State Police bomb technicians are not available, contact the E.O.D., 67th Ordinance Detachment, and Ft. McNair, Virginia. In incidents where hand grenades, artillery shells, or other obvious military items are found, the 67th Ordinance Detachment should be notified for disposition.

5. The doors and windows in the area of the device should be opened.
6. Keep the public at a safe distance from the court complex for the duration of the emergency. Sheriff's Office personnel should be stationed in such a manner so they can prevent anyone from entering the area. The Leesburg Police Department should be contacted for assistance with crowd control.
7. Station enough Sheriff's Office personnel to protect the object from disturbance but as great a distance as possible while making sure the object is secure.

H. Post-explosion notification and investigative responsibility

Refer to General Order 406.7, Section III, G, 1-2, and H.

- I. The Corrections and Court Security Division Commander is assigned responsibility for the implementation, annual review, and revisions to this General Order.