

	Houston Independent School District Police Department Directives	DIRECTIVE: 450-024
		EFFECTIVE DATE: May 28, 2013
	SUBJECT: Bomb Threats	REVISED DATE: January 14, 2023

PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to specify the responsibilities of initial units responding to the scene of calls that may involve explosives and the proper methods for dealing with bomb threats. This directive applies to all Houston Independent School District Police personnel.

POLICY

In all incidents involving explosives, the protection of human life will dictate the exact procedure to be followed in a given situation. The use of a specialized unit trained in handling, disposing, and investigating such incidents is mandatory to help assure the safety of all persons and the proper handling of the technical investigation. Supervisors unfamiliar with explosives disposal procedures will not order or direct the handling or disposal of an explosive or suspected explosive item without first consulting the Houston Police Department Bomb Squad.

BOMB THREATS—GENERAL

When a bomb threat is received by personnel of this department or is reported by other persons, these procedures will be followed:

- a) A supervisor and patrol unit shall be dispatched to the location of the bomb threat and contact the person in charge of the premises. The contact person shall be given the facts known at the time and then decide whether those premises shall be evacuated and searched.
- b) If consent to evacuate and search is given, the supervisor should ask dispatch to send adequate field units to quickly and thoroughly search the premises, using the involved establishment's personnel whenever possible and proper.
- c) Should any known or suspected explosives are located, dispatch shall be notified immediately to dispatch the Bomb Squad within that jurisdiction. The Bomb Squad will respond to the scene and assume command.
- d) If requested, officers at the scene shall evacuate all persons from the premises and secure the area, doing everything possible to minimize the risk of injury or death. In determining the extent of evacuation required, it shall be assumed that a bomb or explosive may cause damage to property and fatal or serious injury to persons within at least 300 feet from the point of the explosion.
- e) All nonessential personnel should also be evacuated to a distance of 300 feet, covered behind a solid protective cover, and instructed not to remain behind glass windows to prevent serious fragmentation injuries.

- f) As a safety precaution, no radio transmission shall be made within 300 feet of a suspected bomb. Police officers may keep their radios in the "On" position to receive transmissions; however, they should not transmit, as sufficient energy may be released to detonate the bomb.
- g) Cellular telephones should not be within 300 feet of a suspected bomb,
- h) The patrol unit initially dispatched to the scene of a bomb threat shall be responsible for completing the report regardless of whether a bomb, explosive, etc., is found.

HANDLING KNOWN OR SUSPECTED EXPLOSIVES

Ammunition smaller than a .50 caliber will not be considered an explosive and may be handled by an investigating officer. All known or suspected explosives, such as nitroglycerin, dynamite, blasting caps, mortar shells, grenades, artillery shells, bombs, or other homemade explosive or pyrotechnic devices, shall be handled only by members of a Bomb Squad. As needed, Molotov cocktails will be handled by either the bomb squad or the arson unit. If any explosives or suspected explosives are found, the area will be evacuated, and these procedures will be followed:

- a) Patrol units shall not attempt to neutralize, disarm, move, transport, or release explosives or devices unless directed by a Bomb Squad member or a further threat to life cannot be avoided.
- b) Officers responding to calls involving explosives or incendiary devices shall request Communications; to notify the Bomb Squad within that jurisdiction. The Bomb Squad will respond to their removal if any explosives are verified.
- c) Explosives shall not be brought into police headquarters. All explosives will be transported by the Bomb Squad for destruction, proper storage, or release to the designated Ordinance Detail.
- d) In incidents involving injury or death because of a bomb, explosive, etc., the Investigations Unit shall conduct the principal investigation with assistance from the Houston Police Department Bomb Squad.

IF A SUSPECTED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE IS FOUND

If a suspected explosive device is found, consult the building principal or other administrator to ensure established protocols, especially building evacuation, are being followed by school personnel.

A supervisor will be dispatched to all bomb threats or incidents involving suspected explosives. The primary supervisor will notify their captain, who will notify the Assistant Chief of Police and the Chief of Police. The Chief of Police will notify the Superintendent and the districts Public Relations Office.

RESPONSE TO A FOUND DEVICE

The responding supervisor will ensure the following guidelines are followed/or conducted:

Minimum Perimeter

- Establish a minimum perimeter of at least 300 feet around a suspected device. This distance is outside the blast radius of most devices.
- Do not allow hand-held radios or cellular telephones within this perimeter because of the possible sensitivity of the detonator to electronic emissions.
- The use of low-power hand-held radios or cellular telephones outside this minimum perimeter does not create a significant chance of causing a detonation.
- Contact the HISD police dispatcher immediately to send a supervisor to the scene.
- Provide the dispatcher with the exact location of the suspected explosive device. Within the school or facility, responding officers can be notified to secure their vehicle radios and switch to hand-held units before they arrive at the scene.
- Vehicle radios shall not be used within one-fourth of a mile of a suspected explosive device. This distance is required because of the higher transmitting power of the vehicle radios.

Building Sweep

If it is determined that a building sweep must be conducted to locate a suspected explosive device, personnel assigned to the building shall be involved. These persons will usually notice something unusual before someone unfamiliar with the building.

In the event a suspected device is located, leave it alone. DO NOT attempt to move the device for any reason.

Evacuate all personnel from the immediate area of the suspected explosive device to, at a minimum, a 300-foot perimeter.

If the bomb squad is not on the scene, have the HISD Police Department dispatcher contact them immediately.

Maintain the 300 to the 500-foot perimeter and do not allow ANY personnel to enter the area other than the bomb squad or personnel assisting them.

Significant Event

The responding supervisor will ensure that a Significant Report is completed before going off-duty.

REPORT REQUIREMENTS

The responding unit will be responsible for initiating the preliminary report. HISD Police Investigators will conduct a follow-up investigation if an explosive device is located or directed by the chain of command.

The report will, at a minimum, contain the following;

- a) The location of the suspected device;

- b) The disposition of the suspected device (i.e., defused, rendered safe, or determined to be fake);
- c) If all or part of the school or facility was evacuated;
- d) Names of all officers involved in the incident;
- e) Names of suspects in the incident (if any);
- f) Names of school district administrators or other personnel involved in the incident;
- g) Any other information deemed relevant.

If a device is located, the responding agencies' Bomb Disposal Unit will be the primary unit and maintain jurisdiction of the scene.

SCENE COMPLETION

After a scene where a device is located is cleared, the supervisor will advise dispatch that the scene is secure. The Chief of Police will notify the district's Media Relations Department and coordinate a release of information statement.

After Action Reports

The Commander over Campus Operations will complete an After Actions Report of the incident once the suspected explosive device is determined to be harmless or rendered inactive by the Bomb Squad. The report shall be completed in five working days and provided to the Assistant Chief of Police for review.

Approved By


Pedro Lopez Jr., Chief of Police