Bomb Threat Guidance

In 2023, The Secure Community Network identified 927 bomb threats, an increase of 1,016.8% from 2022. Following the Hamas terrorist attacks of October 7th, SCN identified 853 bomb threats. Most bomb threats were received via email and, often, distributed in clusters grouped by state and coordinated between groups claiming responsibility for the bomb threats. While none of these threats materialized into an actual device being planted or found, these threats have the potential to disrupt the operations of organizations and facilities in addition to causing fear and anxiety.

Every threat should be treated seriously. With proper planning and preparation, to include with law enforcement, organizations and facilities can be in a better position to respond to and address threats. While in certain cases, evacuation may be recommended, in others sheltering in one's location, or a designated location, may be more prudent. Some threats may be able to be dismissed without having to react, based on information available or provided by law enforcement or other partners.

Assessing a Bomb Threat

Low Risk

Lacks Realism: A threat that poses a minimum risk to the victim and public safety. The probable motive is to cause disruption. Some examples include:

- Threat is received via email or Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) phone system
- Threat is vague and indirect
- Information contained within the threat is inconsistent, implausible, or lacks detail
- Caller is known and has called numerous times
- The threat was discovered instead of delivered (e.g. a threat written on a wall or email over the weekend)
- Threat is received across multiple jurisdictions and/or states and contains similar wording

Medium Risk

Increased Level of Realism: A threat that could be carried out, although it may not appear entirely realistic. Some examples include:

- Threat is direct and feasible
- Wording in the threat suggests the perpetrator has given some thought to how the act will be carried out
- May include indications of a possible place and time
- No strong indication the perpetrator has taken preparatory steps, although there may be some indirect reference pointing to that possibility
- Indication the perpetrator has details regarding the availability of components needed to construct a bomb
- Increased specificity to the threat (e.g. **"I'm serious!"** or "**I really mean this!"**)

High Risk

Specific & Realistic: A threat appears to pose an immediate and serious danger to the safety of others. Some examples include:

- Threat is direct, specific, and realistic; may include names of possible victims, specific time, and location of device
- Perpetrator provides his/her identity
- Threat suggests concrete steps have been taken toward carrying out the threat
- Perpetrator indicates they have practiced with a weapon or have had the intended victim(s) under surveillance

Prior To A Threat: Develop A Plan

Develop a Response Plan

- Coordinate with law enforcement & first responders to contribute to the planning process
- Establish a Crisis Response Team with onsite leadership and designated "Decision Makers"
- Establish shelter-in-place locations
- Establish multiple evacuation routes with signage and designated assembly areas
- Develop a facility-specific protocol on whether and how to evacuate, shelter-in-place, or dismiss a potential threat
- Establish and implement procedures for searches and building sweeps
- Maintain copies of each plan, along with important phone numbers (neighboring businesses, nearby hospitals, etc.)
- Gather and retain personnel info (CPR- and first aid trained, staff photos & names, sign in and sign-out sheets, provisions for staff and visitors with special needs, and descriptions of need)
- Train all personnel on planning/preparation

Mitigate Threats

- Maintain strict building access, and master key control (code keys to rooms with printed list and maintain blueprints, floor plans, site map, and photos and videos of the building in print and digital copies)
- Ensure adequate internal/external emergency lighting & unobstructed exits
- Monitor CCTV camera coverage of incoming parcels
- Establish policy and process for inspecting and screening mail and incoming packages
- Safeguard confidential material

Response

- Consider the facts, context, and totality of the circumstances, then determine a response.

Always Call 911 & Limit Access to the Facility

Considerations

Exact wording of the threat

Prior threats against this or similar facilities

Current events

Accessibility of the site

Occupants of the site

Risk Levels

Low	A **vague** and **indirect** threat that poses a minimum risk to the victim or public safety
Medium	A threat that is **direct** and **feasible** and could be carried out, although it may not appear realistic
High	A threat that is **direct, specific, realistic,** and poses an immediate and serious danger to the safety of others.

Threat Response Options

→ Assess the threat's credibility, search the facility, and notify stakeholders

→ Assess, shelter in place, and search

→ Assess & evacuate

SCN Bomb Threat Reportings

Total Bomb Threats, 2022 & 2023

2022 **83**

2023 **927**

% Increase

1,016.8%

Reportings Post 07 OCT 23

853