



Research Brief

Bomb Threats

Question: What should high school administrators do in the case of receiving bomb threats?

Summary of Findings:

Bomb threats and bomb threat hoaxes are rare. But in Post-9/11 America, all threats are becoming an increasing concern on school campuses.

Experts make the following recommendations:

Developing a bomb threat response plan.

- Develop bomb threat protocols for schools, special events, and school buses, and effectively communicate them to all staff and area public safety agencies.
- Develop a threat reporting system.
- Train staff on their plan components and responsibilities. Training for search team members is particularly important.
- Rehearse your Bomb Threat Plan in a way similar to a fire drill.
- Review your plan with local emergency response officials.
- Take reasonable steps to secure plan components from students and others who might attempt to use stolen plans in planning attacks

Being proactive.

- Foster a positive school climate, free of aggression.
- Identify troubled children, bullies and victims of targeted violence.
- Educate students on the seriousness of calling in bomb threats.
- Install call tracing features on school phones and train staff on their use.
- Implement a “tip-line” program that allows students, teachers, parents, staff, and other members of the school community to report issues anonymously, if they choose.
- Train staff on identifying and handling suspicious packages and letters.
- Train everyone to recognize and report suspicious activities on campuses.

Responding to a bomb threat.

- Record the threat.
- Analyze the severity of the threat.
- Evacuate the school.
- Attempt to locate the bomb.
- Talk to the media.

Following up after the incident.

- Communicate with parents.
- Prosecute individuals who call in bomb threats and publicize the fact that arrests have been made and will be made in the event of future events.
- Ask prosecutors to seek restitution for actual costs to the school system and to local public safety agencies when violators are arrested. If this support is received, publicize the results.



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Online Resources:

Bomb Threat Basics

By Michael Dorn

Executive Director of Safe Havens International Inc.

Although they seem rare, bomb threats and explosive devices, both hoaxes and real, are becoming an increasing concern on school campuses. Simple tactics can exploit bomb threat response plans that are not properly developed. Bomb threat management requires detailed emergency operations plan protocols. What can and should schools do? A few key responses can go a long way to help schools decrease the threat level and to reduce the number of bomb threats received.

<http://www.safehavensinternational.org/BombThreatBasics.php>

Another version of this article

<http://www.peterli.com/archive/spm/231.shtm>

Proactive Guide for the Threat of Terrorism in Schools

Throughout the rest of the world schools have been targeted for terrorist activity in the past. Although we are currently not aware of any specific threats against schools in the United States, we believe that circumstances warrant that our schools adopt a heightened state of awareness. The purpose of this guide is to address the potential for terrorist activity in our schools, within the context of September 11, and the new reality we face. Terrorism is a specific kind of violence, characterized by specific types of threats. It is distinguished from the vast majority of other crimes where motives are personal and the victims individually targeted.

<http://www.google.com/search?q=cache:cg6iSd2uHwAJ:www.txssc.txstate.edu/downloads/TxSSC/Terrorism%2520Proactive%2520Guide.pdf+%22high+school%22+%22bomb+threat%22+procedure+protocol&hl=en&gl=us&ct=clnk&cd=8&client=firefox-a>

PDF version

<http://www.txssc.txstate.edu/downloads/TxSSC/Terrorism%20Proactive%20Guide.pdf>

Bomb Threats in Schools

by Graeme R. Newman

U.S. Department of Justice; Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

The guide begins by describing the problem and reviewing factors that increase the risk of bomb threats in schools. The guide then identifies a series of questions that might assist you in analyzing the local problem of bomb threats in schools. Finally, the guide reviews responses to the problem and what is known about these from evaluative research and police practice.

http://www.popcenter.org/Problems/problem-bomb_threats.htm

Terrorism Supplement to the Indiana Department of Education's Checklist for a Safe and Secure School Environment. [Indiana]

(Indiana Department of Education, Feb 2003)

This checklist covers three types of terrorist activities: radiological, biological, and chemical. The supplement is divided into two sections: first, an overview of terrorism and the types of attacks that might result from terrorist activity; second, some suggestions to help schools prepare for terrorism. This checklist is designed to be brief, to-the-point, user-friendly, and practical. 20p.

<http://www.doe.state.in.us/issas/pdf/cklstterrorism.pdf>

Emergency Preparedness Plan for Utah Schools.

(Utah State Office of Education, Salt Lake City, UT , 2003)

This plan includes purpose, policy, and planning guidelines for specific hazards such as utility failure, severe weather, civil disturbance, bomb threats, etc. 42p.

<http://des.utah.gov/pdf/safeschools/utedschoolplan.pdf>



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State And Local School Emergency Planning Guides

National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities' (NCEF) resource list of plans, guidelines, manuals, and checklists developed by school districts and state education offices to assist schools in preparing for and responding to emergency and disaster situations.

http://www.edfacilities.org/rl/statelocal_emergency.cfm

Submitted Date: 10/16/2006 By: Mike Muir, Maine Center for Meaningful Engaged Learning

<http://www.principalspartnership.com/>

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