

# CITY OF BARSTOW

CALIFORNIA

POLICIES and PROCEDURES MANUAL: POLICE

Subject: EXPLOSIVES AND BOMB THREATS

## INTRODUCTION

It is the policy of the Barstow Police Department to investigate all crimes reported involving the use of explosives and/or the threat of explosives. To provide guidelines for detection, identification, recovery, field evaluation and safe disposal of any explosive material reported, the Barstow Police Department has adopted the following procedure.

## PROCEDURE

1. The person receiving the original notification of an explosive or any explosive device shall obtain all information possible concerning the description of the explosive material, its exact location (including the type of building in which it is located) and the number of persons who might be affected by the detonation. If an anonymous call is received, the person receiving the call shall record the time of the call.
2. Whenever notification is received to the effect that a bomb or explosive exists within the city, the person receiving the call shall immediately notify the Watch Commander who shall take the following actions:
  - a. One or more Police Officers shall be dispatched immediately.
  - b. The Watch Commander shall advise all police units not specifically assigned to the scene to stay clear of the area. Additional units will be sent to the scene only after being requested by the Watch Commander or the officer in charge at the scene.
3. In the event an explosive and/or suspected explosive device is located, the officer at the scene shall immediately request that the Police Dispatcher contact the Watch Commander; the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Bomb Disposal Unit or a designated military explosive ordinance detail (EOD) and the Barstow Fire Department. The notification will include the most precise possible description of the material(s) involved. The Dispatcher shall determine from the bomb disposal unit the approximate time their personnel are expected to arrive at the scene and shall convey this information to the requesting field unit.

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## 4. Scene Evaluation

a. If the call is in response to a bomb threat, the decision as to whether or not to evacuate the building must be made by the owner, manager, principal or other person in charge of the building. If a bomb or explosive is located, it is appropriate for the officer in charge to order and supervise evacuation of the building. In such cases the Police Officers should consult with the Watch Commander to determine the necessary extent of evacuation. For example, if a small package is found in a large new office building, it may indicate evacuation of only the floor it is located on and the floors immediately above and below. A suspected bomb found in an older, more flammable building may require total evacuation.

1. When effecting a partial evacuation, steps must be taken to insure that persons in non-evacuated areas do not enter the affected area.
2. In any evacuation steps must be taken to insure that no unauthorized persons enter the building. Citizens should be directed to wait at some distance from the evacuated area, preferably at least 300 feet away or shielded by some other building.
3. If evacuation is effected before the explosive is located, all persons leaving the building should be directed to take with them personal belongings such as purses, packages and briefcases (so that there will be fewer of such items to search). All persons should be requested to turn off all electrical equipment (electrical typewriters, copying machines) prior to evacuation.

## b. Search

1. Whenever an explosive or suspected explosive device is reported to be at a particular location and such explosive is not readily apparent to police arriving at the scene, a search shall be made, barring circumstances which make a police search inappropriate. Examples of when it might be inappropriate to conduct a search are:

- a. When a large building housing hundreds of workers (or students) receives several telephone bomb threats during the same day.

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- b. The management or person in charge of the premises does not want a search made.
    - c. The premises have already been searched by occupants.
  2. All searches will be organized by the Watch Commander and the officer in charge. All searches must be properly organized and all participants must be properly instructed. The search will be based on the assumption that an explosive is present. When a decision to evacuate a building is made, the search will not begin until the evacuation is complete. The person in charge of the building will be requested to accompany the person in charge of the search. Pass keys and copies of the floor plan of the building should be obtained when possible.
  3. Searching should be done in the safest, most effective manner possible. Officers and supervisors should consider using persons that are most familiar with the area to aid officers in the search. If persons other than police officers are to be involved in the search, they should work with a police officer as a team and should not act independently of the police operations.
    - a. All search personnel should clear the target area 15 minutes before detonation time and remain clear from the target area for 15 minutes after detonation time.
    - b. Prior to conducting a search, a signal should be decided which will inform all personnel that an explosive device has been discovered. All personnel should continue to be alerted even after the signal for a found device has been given, as there may be other explosive devices in the area.
    - c. When conducting a search indoors, electrical outlets and switches should not be operated as their use could be the activating mechanism for the explosive.
  4. All participating personnel will move with extreme caution both during the search and after the explosives are located. Some suggested searching procedures are as follows:

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- a. The outside areas and the outsides of buildings should be searched first. The building should be searched from the bottom up and areas most open to the public (hallways, bathrooms, elevators) should be searched first.
  - b. Time-delay mechanisms can often be heard; therefore, officers conducting the search should pause to listen when they enter a room before beginning to search it.
  - c. The room should be searched by first visually observing from the floor to waist height, then from waist height to eye level, and then from eye level to the ceiling. The ceiling and its fixtures (lights, false ceilings, heating outlets) should be visually searched last. After a room has been searched, the outside of all its doors should be marked with chalk.
5. Officers involved in searches should be cognizant of the following possibilities:
- a. Loose or raised boards or stairwell treads, moveable bricks, drawers, chairs, sofas, beds, etc. All may conceal triggering devices that will be activated when the object is moved, consequently, nothing should be disturbed until it has been examined.
  - b. Windows, doors, cupboard doors, doorknobs, etc., should be carefully examined for strings, wires, springs, or other release devices before being moved.
  - c. Broken wires must be kept apart and electrical switches not operated until the entire circuit has been checked. Operating an electric switch could detonate an electrically activated explosive.
6. When an explosive or suspected explosive has been discovered, all search personnel, except the assigned officer, will leave the area by their original routes of entry and will be particularly careful of the following points.
- a. All vibration will be avoided in the area of the explosive.

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- b. No radio transmission will be allowed within one block of the area except that the distance may be less if several walls or buildings are between the transmitter and explosives.
7. Reports of bombs in school buildings and hospitals
- a. In those instances where the target facility has a bomb incident plan in effect, their plan will be followed.
- b. Officers responding to such incidents should contact the person in charge of the facility and make arrangements to assist him in neutralizing the bomb threat.
- (1) Such incidents shall be handled as unobtrusively as possible.
- (2) If a police officer discovers a device, he should take no action himself but should notify the person in charge of the facility of his findings and make recommendations for evacuation of the facility. The actual decision to evacuate the facility shall be left to the person in charge of the facility, and not the police.
- (3) Officers shall remember that responsibility for ordering evacuation and/or search of such facilities rests with the person in charge of that facility, and not the police.
- (4) If the person in charge of the facility makes a request for police to handle the incident, it will be handled as outlined in this Directive.

## 8. Damage Control

If there is a possibility of detonation prior to the estimated times or arrival of bomb disposal units, steps should be taken to minimize the damage that will result from detonation.

- a. Fire and medical teams should be moved into position to provide rapid assistance in the event of detonation.

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- b. Utility services such as gas and fuel oil that may contribute to the damage of an explosion should be cut off in the bomb area, if not already discontinued throughout the facility.
- c. Windows and doors should be opened in order to vent the blast if detonation should take place.
- d. Any materials that might ignite and contribute to fire damage during detonation should be removed.
- e. Should any protective structures or barriers be erected to minimize damage, the barrier should not touch the bomb or the surfaces to be protected and should not be made of material that will fragment and contribute to any shrapnel generated by the detonation. Any covering of the device should be accomplished by the bomb disposal unit.

## 9. Reporting Requirements

The police officer assigned to the scene shall prepare all reports of the incident. Bomb incidents are reported on a police report entitled as follows:

- a. Possession of any explosive or explosive device is: Possession of explosives (12303 PC).
- b. Possession of any explosive or destructive device in a public place is: Possession of destructive device-public place (12303.2 PC).
- c. Any explosion resulting from explosives or destructive devices: Explosion of destructive device (12303 PC).
- d. If anyone is killed as a result of a bombing, the offense is Murder (187 PC).
- e. If it is intended that anyone be killed by the bombing, the offense is: Explosion of destructive device with intent to commit murder (12303 PC).

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- f. If anyone is injured by the bombing, the offense report is: Explosion of destructive device causing mayhem (12310 PC). The latter is a capital crime.
- g. If the bomb report is determined to be false, the report is: False report of bomb (148.1 PC).
- h. Where a commercial explosive or military ordinance is recovered under circumstances not indicating a criminal act, a found property report will be completed entitled: Found property - explosives.
- i. Whenever a police report is prepared for one of the above offenses, the report shall be marked, in the appropriate space, with copies to the Police Patrol Lieutenant and the Chief of Police.

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