

Georgia Department of Public Safety

Policy Manual

SUBJECT BOMB THREATS/SUSPICIOUS ITEMS	POLICY NUMBER 16.03
DISTRIBUTION ALL EMPLOYEES	REVISED DATE 4/25/2024
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16.03.1 Purpose

The Department of Public Safety (DPS) seeks to maximize the safety and security of DPS members and to minimize the disruption of the workplace in the event of a bomb threat or suspicious materials received or located at any DPS facility.

16.03.2 Policy

All bomb threats and any packages, apparatus, device, letters, envelopes, or material suspected of containing explosives, contaminants, poison, or toxins received or located at any DPS facility shall be considered credible until determined otherwise. This policy sets forth procedure for prompt determinations, including protocol for notifications, response, and investigations.

16.03.3 Procedures

A. Bomb Threats and Suspected Explosives

1. Bomb Threat Received by Telephone

a. Information Gathering

Any member who receives a telephone call of a bomb or threat shall attempt to collect the following information:

- 1) Caller ID Information
- 2) Where is the bomb right now;
- 3) What does the bomb look like;
- 4) When is the bomb going to explode;
- 5) What kind of bomb is it;
- 6) What will cause the bomb to explode;
- 7) Did you place the bomb;
- 8) Why;

- 9) What is your name; and
- 10) Caller's voice tone and any background noises.

- b. The Exhibit #16.03-1 Bomb Threat Procedures and Checklist shall be maintained in all facilities and be consulted when available to the member receiving the threat.

2. Bomb Threat Received in Writing

If a written threat is received at a DPS facility, any written material, envelopes, or containers shall be treated as physical evidence and shall not be subjected to any unnecessary handling.

3. Notification Protocol for Bomb Threats

- a. For a threat at the DPS Headquarters Complex (HQ), the member receiving the call shall immediately seek notification of:
 - a. The Office of the DPS Commissioner at (404) 624-7477; and
 - b. The Georgia Information Sharing and Analysis Center (GISAC).
- c. For a threat at a DPS facility other than HQ, the member receiving the threat shall immediately seek notification of
 - d. The local emergency communications center (911);
 - e. The DPS Commissioner's Office at (404)624-7477;
 - f. GISAC.
- b. The DPS Commissioner or designee shall instruct available sworn members to respond to the scene.
- c. Troop Communications Center - Upon notification of a bomb threat, the Troop Communications Center shall transmit a notification to all members on the Troop Frequency to immediately cease all radio transmissions and cellular telephone calls (10-3, 10-33, 10-89, Give Location).

4. Response Protocol for Bomb Threat and Suspected Explosives

- a. Evacuation Protocol
 - 1) The DPS Commissioner or designee shall order the building to be evacuated. This shall be accomplished by verbal command, public address announcement, and/or the building's fire alarm.
 - 2) When the evacuation is ordered, an assembly point shall be designated at a safe location (the recommendation is a minimum distance of 1,000 feet from the building in order to minimize the danger to members).
 - 3) Work unit supervisors or his/her designee shall be responsible for monitoring the presence of their staff and ensuring that all their members have evacuated the building.

- 4) Sworn members shall be responsible for the establishment of an outer perimeter in order to provide for the safety of members and to prevent unauthorized access to the building.
 - 5) Upon evacuation to a secure area, the Troop Communications Center personnel shall be responsible for contacting emergency medical personnel, the fire department, the GBI Bomb Disposal Unit and the utility companies that provide both natural gas and electrical power.
 - 6) Upon evacuation to a secure area, the Public Information Office shall be responsible for the establishment of a media area outside the secured perimeter.
 - b. Facility Search Protocol for Bomb Threat
 - 1) If it is determined that a search of a DPS facility is to be conducted, it shall be done under the supervision of the DPS Commissioner or designee, in consultation with the GBI Bomb Disposal Unit.
 - 2) Searches shall be conducted by sworn members in areas having the greatest public access, which includes the lobby and public restrooms. Search efforts shall also be focused on the exterior of the building.
5. Protocol When Suspected Explosives are Located
- a. If suspected explosives are located, they shall not be moved or handled in any manner.
 - b. The GBI Bomb Disposal Unit shall be contacted and shall assume responsibility for the device.
 - c. The Troop Communications shall notify fire and emergency medical personnel as well as natural gas and electrical power providers to be on standby in the event of an explosion.
 - d. The Sworn Work Unit Supervisor shall handle media inquiries when practicable.
 - e. The GBI Bomb Disposal Unit supervisor, in consultation with the DPS Commissioner or designee, shall determine when the facility and grounds have been cleared and members are able to re-enter and resume normal operations.
6. Investigation Protocol Following Threat Resolution
- After the threat has been resolved, the following shall occur:
- a. The GBI shall be contacted for consultation to determine if an investigation is warranted.
 - b. The Unit Supervisor shall complete an Incident Report and forward a copy through the chain of command to the Adjutant/Division Director, regardless of the outcome of the threat or suspicious package contents.
 - c. If the GBI deems it necessary, the FBI shall be requested to assist in the investigation of the incident.

B. Suspicious Package, Substance, or Device when Unexpectedly Discovered or Received

In situations of unexpected discovery or receipt of a suspicious package, substance, or device at a DPS facility, the following shall occur:

1. Member Responsibilities

a. Handling Restraints

- 1) Package, letter, or device – the member shall not handle, open, or move a suspicious package, letter, or device.
- 2) Substance – for a discovered suspected contaminant, poison, or toxin, including but not limited to any such substances discovered in an envelope or package, the member shall:
 - a) Secure it by gently laying it down;
 - b) Leave the room and close the door;
 - c) Seek appropriate personnel to shut off the ventilation system if possible; and
 - d) Immediately wash his/her hands with soap and water.

b. Notifications

- 1) With a reasonable suspicion, consider immediate activation of the Evacuation Protocol, as set forth in Section “A” of this policy; and
- 2) Notify his/her supervisor immediately.

2. Supervisor Responsibilities

The supervisor shall act expeditiously, as follows:

- a. Gather information from the member (e.g., whether there is a powder-covered envelope, suspicious wires, or an unknown substance) leaking from an unlikely location; and
- b. Determine whether there is a threat or risk to the extent it is practicable, reasonable, and safe to do so.
- c. For a Device determined as a threat or risk:
 - 1) Follow the Notification Protocol for Bomb Threats, as set forth in Section “A” of this policy; and
 - 2) Ensure activation of the Evaluation Protocol, as set forth in Section “A” of this policy.

- d. For a Suspicious Package with unknown contents and determined as a threat or risk, notify competent, trained, and properly equipped sworn members.
 - e. For a Substance determined as a threat or risk of contaminants, poison, or toxins, notify competent, trained, and properly equipped sworn members.
3. Response Protocol of Competent, Trained and Properly Equipped Sworn Members
- a. Conduct a hazard risk assessment.
 - b. Consider activation of the Evacuation Protocol, as set forth in Section “A” of this policy.
 - c. For a determined risk of explosives – ensure activation of, and follow the Response Protocol for Bomb Threat and Suspicious Explosives, as set forth in Section “A” of this policy;
 - d. For a determined substance risk;
 - 1) Aid any member that has been exposed to suspicious substance(s);
 - 2) Notify Public Health and Emergency Management Officials and request that they respond to the site, when determined necessary;
 - 3) Notify the FBI, as necessary, to provide further consultation and instructions for collecting and maintaining the proper chain of custody.
 - 4) Prepare the materials for transport, including but not limited to confirming triple bagging by HAZMAT personnel prior to their acceptance.
 - 5) Follow all chain of custody and evidence procedures.
 - 6) Ensure activation of, and comply with the Investigation Protocol Following Threat Resolution, as set forth in Section “A” of this policy.