ProtectUK

Incident procedures

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The vast majority of bomb threats are hoaxes designed to cause alarm and disruption. As well as the rare instances of valid bomb threats, terrorists may also make hoax bomb threat calls to intimidate.

Bomb Threats

While many bomb threats involve a person-to-person phone call, an increasing number are sent electronically using email or social media applications. No matter how ridiculous or implausible the threat may seem, all such communications are a crime and should be reported to the police by dialling 999.

Ensure you have plans that include how the threat information is recorded, acted upon and passed to police.

Evaluating the threat

Evaluating the credibility of a threat is a critical task, particularly if the attack being threatened is imminent. This is a tactic used to place additional pressure on decision makers. Police will assess the threat at the earliest opportunity.

Responsibility for the initial decision-making remains with the person responsible for the polling station or counting office as the location being threatened. Do not delay your decision-making process waiting for the arrival of police. Your options are to evacuate, lockdown the premises or, where the threat is assessed as not credible, limit your actions to informing the police and searching the venue for suspicious items.

Telephone bomb threat

- Stay calm and listen - alert a colleague to call 999.
- Allow the caller to speak uninterrupted.
- Obtain as much information as possible about the caller, including the caller's number if possible.
- Try to get the caller to be precise about location and timing of the alleged bomb and who they represent.
- Write down what is said, what location is being targeted and how. Record the message if possible.
- After the call dial 1471 to obtain the caller number where possible.

Email bomb threats

- Do not reply, forward or delete a bomb threat made via email.
- Note the address and print off a hard copy.
- Preserve all web log files; as a guide, keep the records for 7 days prior and 48 hours after the receipt of the threat message.

Social media bomb threats

- Do not reply, forward or delete a bomb threat made via social media.
- Note which application has been used and any username/ID.

In all cases

- Complete 'Actions to be Taken on Receipt of a Bomb Threat' pro-forma/checklist at the end of this section.
- Avoid revealing details about specific incidents to the media or through social media without prior consultation with police.

You can open and download the following checklist: Bomb Threat Checklist.

Unattended Items - The HOT protocol

Use the **HOT** (**H**idden, **O**bvious, **T**ypical) protocol to inform your judgement:

Is it **HIDDEN**?

- Has the item been deliberately concealed or is it obviously hidden from view?

Is it **OBVIOUSLY** suspicious?

- Does it have wires, circuit boards, batteries, tape, liquids or putty-like substances visible?
- Do you think the item poses an immediate threat to life?

Is it **TYPICAL**?

- Is the item typical of what you would expect to find in this location?

What to do:

- Do not touch it.
- Make immediate enquiries to trace the owner.
- Did anyone see who left it?
- Can CCTV be checked?
- Does it have a label identifying the owner?

Remember: If you think it's suspicious, **REPORT IT** - to Security, management or the police.

Apply the 4Cs protocol

Now apply the 4Cs (**C**onfirm, **C**lear, **C**ommunicate, **C**ontrol) protocol: - Consider contingency arrangements for ballot box security under evacuation protocols.

CONFIRM the item is suspicious:

- If the item is assessed to be unattended rather than suspicious, examine further before applying lost property procedures.
- However, if **HOT** leads you to believe the item is suspicious, apply the 4Cs.

CLEAR the immediate area:

- Do not touch it.
- Take charge and move people away to a safe distance. Even for a small item such as a briefcase move at least 100m away from the item.
- Keep yourself and other people out of line of sight of the item. It is a broad rule, but generally if you cannot see the item then you are better protected from it.
- Think about what you can hide behind. Pick something substantial and keep away from glass

such as windows and skylights.
- Cordon off the area.

COMMUNICATE – Call 999:

- Do not use mobile phones or radios within 15 metres of the item.

CONTROL access to the cordoned area:

- Staff and members of the public should not be able to approach the area until it is deemed safe.
- Try and keep eyewitnesses on hand so they can tell police what they saw.

HOT principles

UNATTENDED ITEMS:
LOST... or SUSPICIOUS?



H

Hidden?

- Has it been concealed or hidden from view?
- Bombs are unlikely to be left in locations such as this – where any unattended item will be noticed quickly.



O

Obviously suspicious?

- Does it have wires, circuit boards, batteries, tape or putty-like substances?
- Do you think the item poses an immediate threat to life?



T

Typical?

- Is the item typical of what you would expect to find in this location?
- Most lost property is found in locations where people congregate.

If after applying the HOT protocols you still believe the item to be suspicious, call 999.

NATIONAL COUNTER TERRORISM SECURITY OFFICE

BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE

NaCTSO HOT Principles Poster.pdf (1.64 MB)

Suspicious activity

What to do

- If someone's behaviour appears suspicious, if it is not what you would normally expect, then you must act without delay.
- If you come across suspicious activity, you must not ignore it.
- What you do will depend on many factors, but you must **TELL** someone.
- If safe to do so, you can approach a person that has been seen acting in a suspicious manner and ask them to account for their actions - Begin with a friendly 'Can I help you'?
- Be confident, be polite but challenge them if you can – use your communication skills.

Calling 999

If you are not satisfied by their answers and suspect immediate danger, move away and call 999 giving the following details:

- **WHO** did you see, what did they look like, what were they wearing?
- **WHAT** have you seen, what has happened?
- **WHERE** did the situation happen and where were you?
- **WHEN** did it happen – what time?
- **WHY** did you think it was suspicious?

'Don't worry, don't delay, just act'. Have the confidence to act.

ACT ACTION COUNTERS TERRORISM

Always remember - Your actions could help avert an attack and save lives

- Look for suspicious activity.
- Learn what is normal for your environment and what is not.
- Learn what is normal activity for your venue as this will make you better able to recognise suspicious activity.
- Understand it, challenge it, report it.
- Whatever you do, do not ignore it.

You cannot spot a terrorist from their appearance, age, ethnicity, gender or clothing. You can identify and report suspicious activity.

KEYWORDS

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HOT PRINCIPLE
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