



CITY OF MADISON POLICE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE



Bomb Threats / Bomb Incidents / PBIED Incidents

Eff. Date 03/18/2025

Purpose

Establish standard operating procedure (SOP) for Madison Police Department (MPD) response to incidents involving bomb threats, bomb incidents and Person Borne Improvised Explosive Device (PBIED, i.e., suicide bomber) incidents.

Procedure

The objectives of MPD in dealing with bomb threats, bomb incidents, and suicide bomber incidents are as follows:

1. Preservation of life for both community members and officers.
2. Apprehension of perpetrator(s) using a reasonable amount of force (if applicable).
3. Protection of public and private property.
4. Securing available evidence to assist in the appropriate disposition of the perpetrator(s).

Safety Priorities

The basis for operational and tactical decisions will be the following safety priorities:

1. Hostages and community members.
2. Law enforcement personnel.
3. Suspects or subjects.

In situations where ongoing deadly force is reasonably likely to be employed by a suspect—and delay in taking police action could result in injury or death—rapid intervention of officers at the scene is authorized and expected when such actions are deemed reasonable to prevent further injuries or loss of life (i.e., person-borne improvised explosive device (IED) or vehicle-borne IED incident).

Definitions

Bomb Threat: Communication through the use of mail, telephone, telegram, or other instrument of commerce—which includes; the willful making of any threat or the malicious conveyance of false information knowing the same to be false which concerns an attempt being made, or to be made—to kill, injure, intimidate any individual; or to unlawfully damage or destroy any building, vehicle, or other real or personal property by means of an explosive.

Explosive Device: Any device designed or specially adapted to cause physical harm to persons or property by means of an explosion and consisting of an explosive substance or agency and a means to detonate it.

Bomb Incident: Any incident where an explosive device or suspected explosive device has been located or has been detonated.

IED (Improvised Explosive Device): A device fabricated in an improvised manner incorporating destructive, lethal, noxious, pyrotechnic, or incendiary chemicals and designed to destroy buildings or incapacitate people or vehicles.

PBIED (Person- Borne Improvised Explosive Device): An improvised explosive device worn on an individual who seeks to cause death, great bodily harm, and property destruction (also known as a suicide bomber).

VBIED (Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device): A device assembled in an improvised manner into a vehicle that is positioned to cause death, great bodily harm, and property destruction (also known as a car or truck bomb).

EOD: Explosive Ordinance Disposal/Detection.

EOD K9: Canine trained in explosive material/ device detection.

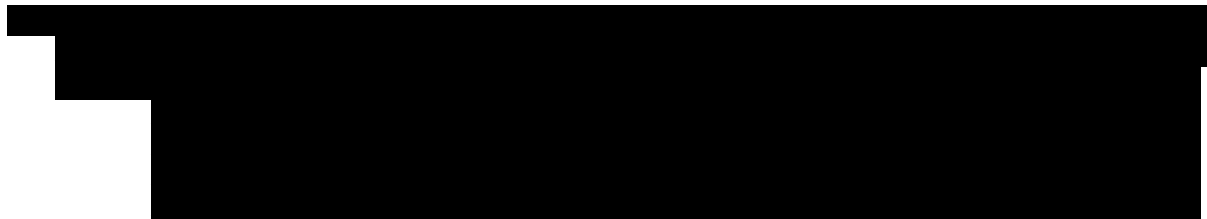
Bomb Threat Response Procedures

RECEIVING A BOMB THREAT

Most bomb threats will usually come through one of three mediums: telephone, mail delivery, or online threats. While telephone calls are the most common means of conveying a bomb threat, threats via the mail do occur and threats via cyberspace and/or social media are becoming more common. Any individual, business, or organization can suddenly be the recipient of a bomb threat.

Any MPD employee who receives a bomb threat should attempt to complete the following:

1. Remain calm to obtain as much information at the first point of contact. Do not put the caller on hold and do not interrupt the caller except to attempt to obtain the following information:
 - Where is the location of the bomb (building, room, floor, etc.)?
 - When will the bomb detonate?
 - What does the bomb look like?
 - What kind of bomb is it?
 - What will make it explode?
 - Did you place the bomb?
 - What is the reason for the bombing?
 - What is the caller's name?
 - Complete a Bomb Threat Checklist (see Attachment 1).



3. Write down all statements. 
4. The decision to conduct a search, initiate a partial or full evacuation, or treat the threat as a hoax and take no action will be determined by the officer taking the threat in consultation with an MPD supervisor assigned to the call. When initiating a search, an Explosive Ordinance Detection Canine should be considered for officer safety.
5. MPD staff may consult the Dane County Sheriff Office's Hazardous Device Unit (HDU).

BOMB THREAT RESPONSE

In responding to a bomb threat call for service, officers responding to the location of a possible explosive device should create a perimeter 

[REDACTED]. Officers should be fully aware of their surroundings and especially alert for devices or secondary devices that are commonly utilized to target first responders.

1. Interviews should be conducted in an area considered safe by the responding officer. [REDACTED]
 - The responding officer should contact the person who received the bomb threat. Contact the person in charge of the target premises to obtain all information regarding the bomb threat.
2. The responding officer can assist the person in charge of the target premises to determine the threat level by reviewing all pertinent information.
 - The responding officer should give serious consideration as to why the individual, business or organization is considered a target. A history of threats and possible motives should be used to establish the credibility of the threat.
3. Any searches of the premises for suspicious items [REDACTED]
 - The final determination to conduct any search will be the responsibility of the property owner or designee.
 - Any search should utilize an explosive ordinance detection canine when available to maximize effectiveness and officer safety [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

 - Officers should move slowly and keep civilian personal behind them during the search. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

 - Consider having Madison Fire Department (MFD) personnel on standby.
 - Officers should understand that the absence of any of the above mentioned does not assure that a bomb is not present.
4. The decision to initiate a partial or full evacuation, or to treat the threat as a hoax and take no action, will be determined by the owner or designee of the property along with MPD input.
 - If the decision is made to evacuate, MPD may assist in the process.
 - Potential actions by MPD (EOD K9, walk through) should be explained to property designee to assist in decision making.

Bomb Incident Response Procedures

UNEXPLODED BOMB INCIDENT

A bomb threat becomes a bomb incident if an object, which might be considered a bomb, suspicious object, or vehicle borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) is located. The responding officer should attempt to conduct the following:

1. Responding officers should be aware of their surroundings. Officers should be alert for suspicious persons or vehicles in the area and for the potential of devices when arriving on scene, as many incidents target first responders.

- Establish command and control with a supervisor.
 - Officers shall not touch or move any suspicious device due to the possibility of initiating a detonation.
 - An accurate description of the device should be obtained if possible.
2. Once the discovery of a device or suspected device is confirmed, the area immediately around the device should be evacuated, leaving the device and its environment undisturbed.
- Evacuate the area.
3. The Dane County Sheriff's HDU should be requested.
- The perimeter can be widened prior to the arrival of Dane County HDU personnel.
 - The on-scene supervisor may be called upon to establish communication with Dane County HDU staff to ensure a proper perimeter has been established (see Attachment 2).
 - No pedestrian or vehicular traffic should be allowed within the perimeter.
 - Control the release of media information (see Attachment 3).
4. The supervisor and officers on scene will assist Dane County HDU as necessary.
- Crowd control and traffic control.
 - Requesting additional resources, such as the Madison Fire Department, etc.
5. No member of MPD other than Dane County HDU shall touch or move any object suspected or confirmed to be an explosive or incendiary device.
- Once Dane County HDU personnel have arrived on scene, the ranking Dane County HDU member is in charge of the explosives aspect of the incident.
 - The final disposition of any device will be accomplished by the Dane County HDU personnel.
6. For incident stabilization procedures, see the Stabilization section below.

POST-DETONATION BOMB INCIDENT

In an incident where a device has detonated--and which has caused personal injury or major property damage--the safety of all first responders is a primary concern as is the preservation of life. Officers at the scene of a major explosive detonation should be aware of the potential for, and the presence of, secondary devices and unconsumed explosives, including on victims.

1. At the site of an explosion, evidence collection and scene preservation are secondary to saving lives.

[REDACTED]

- Those injured persons who cannot walk should be taken to the CCP by any means available.
 - Once all injured persons are removed to the CCP, first aid may be administered.
 - Officers should realize that emergency medical personnel may designate a more suitable CCP upon their arrival.
 - The emergency treatment of injured persons should be turned over to qualified emergency medical personnel as soon as possible.
 - The bodies of bomb blast victims, who are obviously deceased, should be left in place just as with any crime scene.
2. Officers shall ensure that the scene remains protected and isolated until the arrival of investigative and Dane County HDU personnel.
- Anyone not injured should be directed to a location safe from detonation and blast pressure, so they may be interviewed as witnesses once investigative resources are engaged.
- [REDACTED]
- The perimeter will be staffed until the investigation is complete, which could be days or even weeks. Arrangements must be made for relief personnel.
 - No non-emergency pedestrian or vehicular traffic should be allowed into the perimeter.
3. For incident stabilization procedures, see the Stabilization section.

Person-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (Suicide Bomber)

SUICIDE BOMBER RESPONSE

A Person-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (PBIED) or suicide bomber presents a unique challenge to law enforcement officers. The threat of death or great bodily harm is always imminent when facing an individual wearing a PBIED.

1. The primary objective in dealing with a suicide bomber is to prevent the bomber from detonating an explosive device.
 - Officers who encounter a suicide bomber may attempt to take the suspect into custody if circumstances permit, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

3. Due to the threat of secondary devices or remote detonation on a suicide bomb device, if the suspect has been rendered incapable of detonating the PBIED:

- Do not approach the suspect.
- Do not render medical assistance.
- Do not allow others to approach the suspect.
- Do not allow others to render medical assistance.

[REDACTED]

- Contact the Dane County HDU.
- Follow the procedures under Unexploded Bomb Incident section.

Stabilization

Once the immediate incident has been stabilized, the scene supervisor/incident commander will:

- Establish a command post and unified command structure with other agencies (MFD, etc.) with security at the command post.
- Establish a staging area for responding emergency personnel.
- In conjunction with the Madison Fire Department, identify the final CCP for injured parties to be taken for triage, treatment, and transportation with security.
- Determine a final collection point/evacuation/interview center for non-injured evacuees from the location.
- Initiate an investigation to determine exactly what has occurred and locate, isolate, and debrief any witnesses.
- Establish a staging area/contact and reunification point for friends and family members of potential victims/witnesses.
- Select a location for media response and designate a person to interact with them prior to the arrival of the agency public information officer.
- Consolidate outer perimeter and traffic plan.
- Establish and maintain a log that documents the activities that have occurred and the location and identification of the assigned personnel.
- Ensure that the appropriate personnel have been notified and briefed (OIC, District Command, etc.) and prepare a staffing and execution plan to hold the perimeter for an extended period of time.
- Coordinate with owners or officials of the target location for floor plans, site layout, and a roster (including emergency contact information as available) of employees, students, community members, visitors, or others believed to be on-site.
- Once any suspects have been located and the threat eliminated, the Dane County HDU will advise of any additional resources needed to conduct secondary or tertiary searches for additional devices.
- Officers assigned to the evacuation center shall maintain custody and control of all persons at the center and shall document their identities until they can be reunited with family or others. Victims and witnesses suffering from emotional and/or physical trauma or shock should be kept under the observation of medical personnel until such time as they may be safely transported to a hospital or home in the care of family or friends.
- Supervisors should monitor responding officers for signs of critical incident stress.
- Officers should be aware that bombings are often conducted in series or as a part of a larger attack.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Original SOP: 05/28/2015
(Reviewed Only: 01/27/2016, 01/09/2017, 12/26/2017, 01/31/2026)
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