Emergency Assistance

1-800-525-5555
or cellular *55

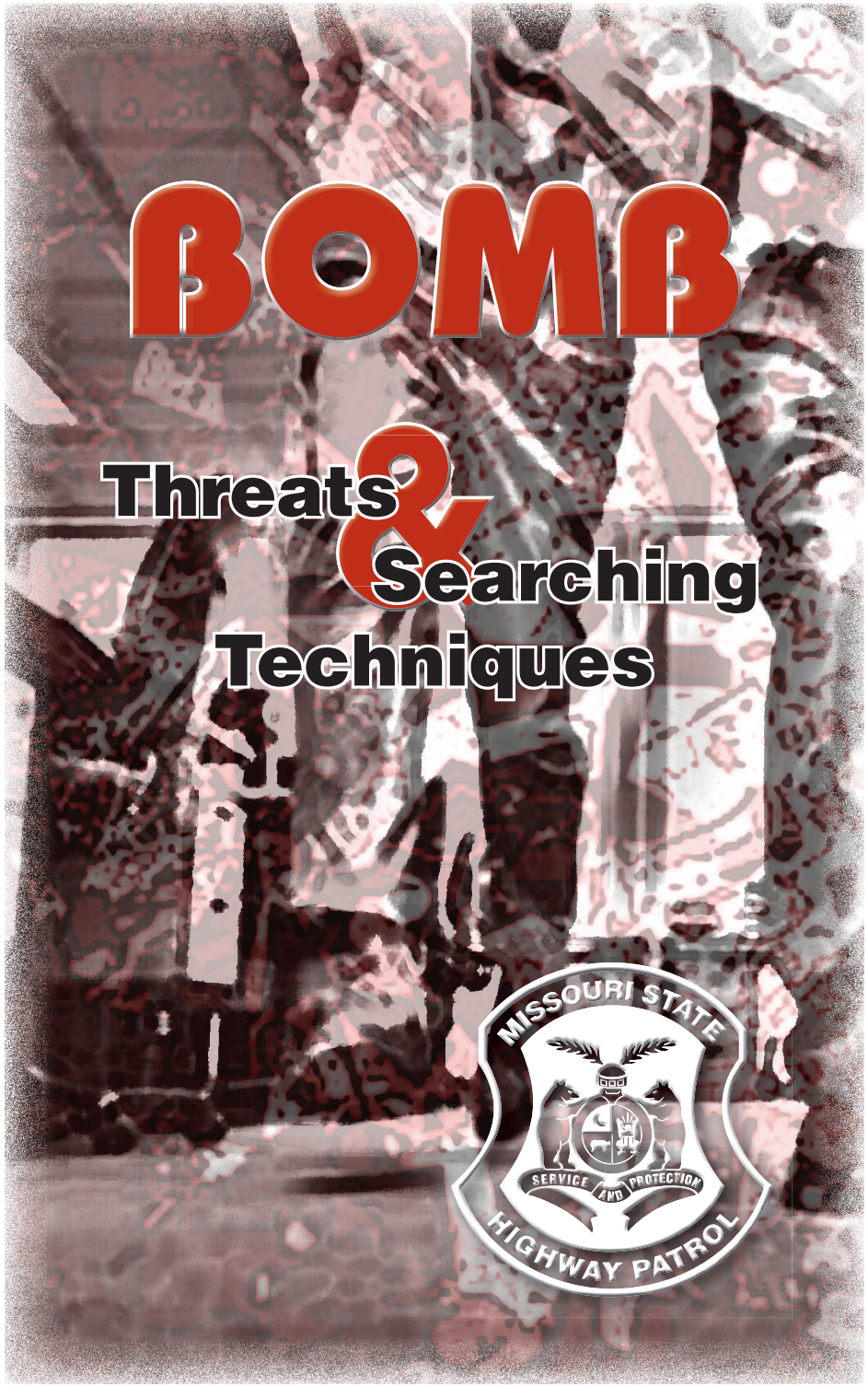
Road Conditions

1-888-275-6636

Missouri State Highway Patrol
1510 East Elm Street
Jefferson City, MO 65101
V/TDD 573-526-3313
www.mshp.dps.missouri.gov
mshppied@mshp.state.mo.gov

An Internationally Accredited Agency

SHP-181 D 5/2016



BOMB Threats & Searching Techniques

Missouri State Highway Patrol
Troop Contact Information

Troop A
504 S.E. Blue Parkway
Lee's Summit, MO 64063-4351
816-622-0800

Troop B
308 Pine Crest Drive
Macon, MO 63552-1030
660-385-2132

Troop C
891 Technology Drive
Weldon Spring, MO 63304
636-300-2800

Troop D
3131 East Kearney Street
Springfield, MO 65803-5044
417-895-6868

Troop E
4947 Highway 67 North
Poplar Bluff, MO 63901-8719
573-840-9500

Troop F
P.O. Box 568
2920 North Shamrock Road
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0568
573-751-1000

Troop G
1226 West Business Hwy 60-63
Willow Springs, MO 65793-0010
417-469-3121

Troop H
3525 North Belt
St. Joseph, MO 64506-1370
816-387-2345

Troop I
P.O. Box 128
1301 Nagogami Road West
Rolla, MO 65402-0128
573-368-2345

GHQ
P.O. Box 568
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0568
573-751-3313

Additional Resources

When planning your response to bomb threats, the following resources may assist you:

- For more information regarding suspicious mail and packages visit the United States Postal Service website:

https://about.usps.com/publications/pub166/pub166_tech_013.htm

- For more information regarding physical security and the "See something, say something" campaign visit the United States Department of Homeland Security website:

http://www.dhs.gov/see-something-say-something/about-campaign

- A more comprehensive resource regarding bomb threats can be found at your local bookseller: "BOMBS: DEFUSING THE THREAT," William J. Borbidge III, ISBN 1-884566-34-0

- For general questions regarding your facility's response plan, contact Missouri State Highway Patrol Bomb Squad, Jefferson City, Missouri — (573) 526-6237

- If your group or civic organization is interested in a safety program, please contact your local public information and education officer.

Effectively dealing with a bomb threat begins long before the threat is received. A comprehensive plan is essential to assessing and managing the risk. The primary component of any plan is it must be adaptable. Since people who make bomb threats don't follow a predictable pattern, neither should your response.

Historically speaking, bomb threats have been communicated for one of three reasons:

1) To disrupt normal operations of a facility.
2) To create excitement or alleviate boredom.
3) To spare human lives while damaging property (in cases involving an actual explosive device).

This publication is not intended to be a substitute for having a comprehensive and adaptable plan. It is intended to highlight things that should be considered when drafting or updating your plan. When determining what to include in your plan for responding to a bomb threat, focus on the probable risks (most likely) rather than the possible risks (what if).

Physical Security

Don't be an easy target! If your facility is less vulnerable than similar facilities, most of the work is already done. Less vulnerable includes simple actions (locking unmonitored doors) to a higher level of security, such as security cameras or security personnel. The best defense, and also the lowest in cost, is promoting the general awareness of site security among employees. If an individual is able to enter your facility undetected and move about without being noticed, especially in non-public areas, your facility is considered a *soft target*–a facility that has inadequate security.

Some facilities are more difficult to secure than others. This publication is not service or facility specific; thus, it is up to you to determine what information applies to your needs. Does your facility include areas that should be subject to controlled or restricted access? Depending on the nature of the threat, areas with properly controlled access may warrant a much lower search priority than uncontrolled areas.

As stated earlier, one of the best forms of security is employee awareness. Teach all employees they have some degree of responsibility for site security regardless of their job description. If your employees are trained to report anything out of the ordinary and where to do so, they will feel empowered and can help maintain a safe work environment. An excellent model can be found on the Department of Homeland Security website under the heading of their "If you see something, say something." campaign. There are a number of resources available online from law enforcement sources detailing not only what you should do, but also what employees should not do when dealing with the physical security of their workplace. These resources cover everything from making the building more secure to how to describe properly a suspicious person or vehicle.

Use Of Two-Way Radios & Cellular Telephones

Radio frequency energy emitted by two-way radios and cellular telephones may cause detonation of improvised explosive devices, either by design of the bomb maker, or as an unintended consequence (i.e. radio frequency interference). Thus, the use of radios and cellular telephones is generally discouraged, yet involves a balance of risk and benefit. The benefit of having a radio or telephone on and available to receive valuable information, such as the confirmed discovery of an improvised explosive device at another location within the building, may outweigh the risks that are created by not having communication. Even if it is determined that the benefit outweighs the risk in a particular situation, no person should use a two-way radio or cellular telephone while near a suspicious object. Emergency communications of this nature should be brief and from as far away as practical, in a location that provides the maximum amount of protection from the suspicious object.

likely not familiar with your facility–they may be unable to recognize something out of place or unusual. Police officers or firefighters can conduct a search of a building to make everyone feel better, but an effective search must involve people are familiar with the facility. Those same personnel will have the ability to determine what should be considered suspicious.

Search Techniques

Any thorough and methodical technique can be an effective search technique. However, this rule must always be followed:

WHEN SOMETHING SUSPICIOUS IS DISCOVERED – DO NOT TOUCH OR DISTURB IT. STOP THE SEARCH, EVACUATE TO A SAFER AREA, AND REPORT THE DISCOVERY TO THE PERSON IN CHARGE OF THE FACILITY.

A recommended search technique assigns first priority to the area from floor to waist level, followed by waist to chin level, then chin to ceiling level. The theory being that it is easier to place something on the floor or ground than in higher locations. Once the floor area has been cleared, checking higher locations will be that much safer. Remember to take note of not only what you see, but what you smell or hear. Searchers should have a good quality flashlight with them, as well as necessary keys, if a locked area of the facility is in an area of concern.

If information contained in the threat message provides any clues to the location, it should be used to determine priority areas for searching. Absent such information, the search should be prioritized to begin with easily accessible areas of the facility. For instance, it would not make sense to search locked storage rooms, before checking the trash receptacles in a lobby or areas along the outside perimeter of a building.

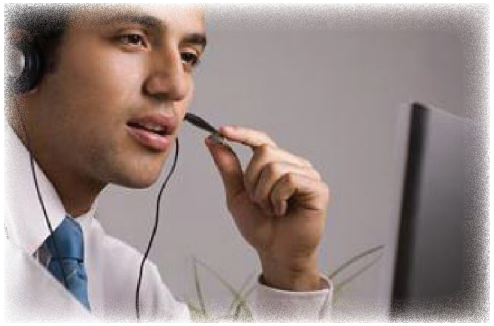
If a suspicious object is discovered, a bomb squad response will be necessary to evaluate the object and determine if it is hazardous, unless additional information becomes available to dispel suspicion about the object. Do not attempt to cover or barricade the object. Do not close or lock doors on your way out. These actions place the searcher at risk by delaying evacuation and drastically complicate a bomb squad response.

Responding To A Threat

How are bomb threats made? How a bomb threat is made is as unique as the person making the threat. How might a bomb threat arrive at your facility? Some possibilities include: in person, a telephone call, electronic mail, postal mail, or via the company website. Any one of these could be used; therefore, it is best for every employee to understand what steps to take if a bomb threat is made.

The Missouri State Highway Patrol provides a bomb threat checklist which is designed to assist in gathering helpful information at the time a bomb threat is made. Whoever receives the bomb threat can use this checklist to assist in the response to the threat. The checklist was developed primarily for communication received by telephone, but will work well with other communication mediums. While it may not be possible to have these checklists at every telephone or location where a threatening communication may be received, all employees should be exposed to it, and employees who regularly answer telephone calls should have a checklist within arm's reach.

It is important that employees receiving threatening communications recognize that their primary responsibility is to elicit as much information about the nature of the threat as possible. Encourage employees to focus on that responsibility and see it through before moving on to other priorities, such as notifications. In the event the threat is received by telephone and the caller seems willing to engage in a discussion about the threat, the employee may need to communicate the threat to others while the caller is still on the line. In this case, the employee's first priority remains gathering information. However, it's important to get another employee's attention and alert them to the situation.



Once a threat is received, the person in charge of the facility is responsible for determining the course of action to be taken. The decision-making process usually involves these basic components:

- Notifying Law Enforcement
- Evacuation
- Searching The Facility

Each of these steps involve specific considerations when making decisions.

Notifying Law Enforcement – This is always a necessary component of the response. Even in situations where a decision is made to give little credibility to the threat and a law enforcement response may not be desired, the notification should always be made. This gives law enforcement the benefit of situational awareness, in the event your facility is not the only one affected. It also provides an opportunity for law enforcement to pass information to you regarding other events about which you may be unaware. This knowledge could drastically change your thoughts regarding a proposed response plan.

Evacuation – A typical bomb threat response plan often involves an orderly evacuation of the facility, with evacuated personnel gathering in a pre-determined location, usually outdoors, until the "all clear" is given. This is done with the thought that it will ensure the maximum degree of safety in a "worst case scenario." While that may be an appropriate response in certain situations, the decision to evacuate should be given very careful consideration. The typical evacuation previously described is usually very predictable. Where security is concerned, **predictability equals vulnerability**. A factor worthy of consideration is the inherent vulnerability of evacuated persons. A large group of people standing in the far corner of a parking lot may be at less risk of being harmed by an explosive device inside a building, but may be exposed to other risks. Consider how difficult it might be to get a significant amount of explosives inside your facility verses how easy it would be to place them in a parked vehicle, culvert pipe, or other outdoor location. Additionally, avoid falling into the trap of thinking that a bomb threat always involves a bomb. If a bomb threat does involve a bomb, are you sure you know where it is? A crowd gathered on a parking lot is considerably more vulnerable to other hazards, such as gunfire, than they were prior to being "evacuated for their safety."

Granted, it's a lot to think about, which is why your plan of action must be adaptable based on the totality of circumstances of each unique case. Evacuation is appropriate in certain situations. This publication is attempting to encourage critical thinking beyond the typical first reaction.

Searching The Facility – A bomb threat destroys the peace of mind of everyone aware of the event. The key to restoring peace of mind is providing assurance that the facility has been searched and that no threats are present. Unfortunately, it's not that simple. It is easy to imagine a scenario of a bomb threat being received, either the police or the fire department arriving and searching the facility, and an "all-clear" given if nothing is found. The problem with that scenario is a bomb can look like any object, and emergency personnel are most