

BATON ROUGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

**General Order
No.292**

**Effective Date
11-01-1994**

**Revised Date
05-11-2016**

Subject: Field Response to Explosives and Suspected Explosive Devices
Reviewed 6/2/16

POLICY

The U.S. Army and the FBI considers the disposal of explosives hazards to be the responsibility of the local jurisdiction. The military will handle all military ordinance incidents and will assist in civilian explosives incidents, wherever possible, and when such incidents are considered a public hazard.

The Explosives Section will be responsible for the rendering safe and disposal of all hazardous devices as directed by the Chief of Police or his designee to include:

The disarming and disposal of homemade bombs and incendiary devices.

The destruction of confiscated or unsafe explosives.

Maintaining liaison with U.S. Army, Louisiana State Police, and other local explosives units to assist them whenever possible.

Conducting post blast bomb scene investigations to gather evidence and assist in the follow up investigation.

Investigating complaints of misuse of explosives.

Instructing Police Officers for purposes of identification and recognition of hazardous devices.

The Explosives Section will maintain 24-hour capability to respond to requests for assistance on any matters concerning explosives and/or incendiary devices.

No explosive, bomb, incendiary, or other dangerous device will be handled by any member of this department without specific training or prior to receiving clearance or specific instruction from the Chief of Police.

Any request by another police/military agency to the Baton Rouge Police Dept. requesting assistance in handling a dangerous device will be referred to the Explosives Section or the Chief of Police.

Police personnel will contact the Explosives Section by notifying Communications. The Communications Section shall maintain a complete and up-to-date list of Explosives Section personnel, Louisiana State Police Explosives Control Section personnel, and Military Explosives Disposal personnel available in this area.

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PROCEDURES

I. General

- A. The local police agency has the overall responsibility for dealing with explosives within its jurisdiction that constitute a public hazard. Therefore, the Baton Rouge Police Department has the responsibility to assist in the disposal and safeguarding of explosive or other hazardous devices.
- B. The purpose of this General Order is to establish the procedure for the Baton Rouge Police Department to follow in the event of a bomb threat, explosion, or discovery of an explosive or incendiary device.
- C. In the event that members of the Baton Rouge Police Department are called upon to investigate reported bombs or bombings, etc., the following procedures have been established to protect not only the responding police officers, but the public as well.
- D. **No person should actually touch or disturb any suspected bomb or other explosive device.**
- E. In all cases of suspected explosive devices, notify an immediate field supervisor as soon as possible.
- F. The field supervisor will notify the Explosives Section to handle the situation.
- G. The Chief of Police will issue necessary instructions when applicable.

II. Bombing or Explosion scene

- A. The bomb scene will be sealed off and secured from all personnel except for public safety and emergency response personnel.
- B. All personnel should be cautioned not to move or otherwise disturb any portion of the bomb scene.
- C. In the event of a large-scale explosion (i.e.: a building or vehicle bombing that would cause a major disruption to the public, not necessarily a mailbox bombing), a command post will be established. Keep in mind that secondary devices have been placed to target responding personnel. Make sure that the immediate area of the command post is secure from any suspicious packages, boxes, backpacks, briefcases, etc.
- D. The Explosives Technician will be dispatched and, upon arrival, will assume command.

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III. Telephone Report of Bomb Threat to Police Facility

- A. On occasion, a bomb threat may be called in to headquarters or any substation to report that a bomb has been placed. If so, the procedures below will be followed:
- B. Keep the caller talking as long as possible. Ask the caller to repeat his/her message and record on tape (if possible) or in writing, every word spoken.
- C. If the caller does not indicate the location of the bomb or the time of detonation, the officer receiving the call should ask for this information as well as any other pertinent information. It is very important to get the time of detonation.
- D. If a specific location is given (i.e. desk, locker, etc.) assume that a bomb has actually been located and take all necessary precautions.
- E. In some cases it may be feasible to advise the caller that the building is occupied and that detonation of the bomb could result in death or serious injury to many innocent people. This may generate the caller to divulge more information.
- F. The officer receiving the call should listen for any unusual background noise, such as motors running, music or other noise that may indicate the place from which the call is being made.
- G. Listen closely to the voice of the caller for determining quality, accent, speech impediments, sex or other identifying characteristics.
- H. If the caller can be kept talking, ask specific questions regarding the bomb, such as size, detonator devices, construction appearance, etc. This would be valuable information in the subsequent search and disposal.
- I. Evacuations should be encouraged only if a suspicious item is found.

IV. Bomb Threat Search Procedure: Offices, Buildings or Complexes (Occupant Search Method)

- A. Always seek assistance from those persons who occupy the building or office. They are familiar with the surroundings and should know what items; equipment, etc. are normally located in the building or office. Janitors and custodians are particularly helpful. Any civilian assistance must be voluntary.
- B. Schools, hospitals, industrial complexes, and office buildings present specific challenges due to their size, if the exact location of the device is unknown. Ascertain whether or not they have a bomb threat plan and if it has been initiated.

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- C. The decision to evacuate must be made ultimately by the individual(s) in charge of the structure. The first officer on the scene should encourage evacuation only if a suspected device is located.
- D. It is the responsibility of the first officer(s) on the scene to contact the supervisor in charge. The (supervisor) must assemble a search team. The search team will consist of only enough persons to effectively and efficiently handle the assignment. The following procedures will be utilized for searches:
 - 1. The search will be made from the basement or ground floor, upward.
 - 2. The exterior of the building will be searched immediately. This order provides an escape route in case a device is found.
 - 3. No one will touch or disturb a suspected device.
 - 4. There will be no smoking during the search.
 - 5. The use of portable radios, cellular phones and portable phones will be avoided.
 - 6. The team should be looking for any strange or out of place objects.
 - 7. The team should be patient and thorough. They will not be able to search everything but should be thorough enough to ensure an area is safe. Teams will exercise caution while searching critical areas and obscure locations such as lockers, desk drawers, boxes, cabinets, air ducts, light fixtures, hallways, rest rooms, false ceilings, etc.
 - 8. If a suspected device is located, proper action should be taken immediately. After this threat is eliminated, the search should resume and continue until the entire structure is safe. There have been numerous instances where secondary devices have been located.
- E. If suspected bomb is not located, officers will report none was located and not that no bomb exists.
- F. Officers should also contact and interview the actual person who received the threat. This person is the victim in the case. If they completed a checklist, and/or made notes or recordings of the threat, this will be taken as evidence.

V. Vehicle Searches

- A. No one without proper training will search a vehicle. If a device is reported or suspected to be in a vehicle, the Explosives Section will be notified. The vehicle and surrounding area shall be secured and isolated until trained personnel arrive.
- B. **Move people away from the vehicle, not the vehicle away from people.**

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VI. Location of a Suspected Bomb or Explosive

- A. Officers will evacuate all persons to a distance of at least 300 feet if possible. A sufficient number of officers will be assigned to maintain this perimeter until the suspected bomb has been removed.
- B. A supervisor will be notified and respond to the scene. A command post with a telephone will be established. At this point all other portable communications including cellular and portable phones will be suspended. Headquarters will be advised of the command post telephone number. The Explosives Unit will be dispatched.
- C. The following information should be available to Explosives personnel upon arrival:
 - 1. Location of the suspected bomb.
 - 2. Location of suspected secondary bombs, if any.
 - 3. Where the suspect package came from.
 - 4. Who discovered the package?
 - 5. Why the package is suspected of being a bomb.
 - 6. If the package has been moved or disturbed. If so, how?
 - 7. What it looks like.

VII. Explosives (Commercial, Military, or Homemade)

- A. Upon receipt of a complaint to handle or dispose of explosives including blasting caps, an officer will be dispatched as a priority call. The officer will make a visual inspection to determine only the possible presence of an explosive element.
- B. If an officer suspects that there is an explosive element, the officer should evacuate the immediate area and a supervisor will be notified to respond to the scene. The Explosives Unit will also be notified and respond. The investigating officer will secure the area until the Explosives Unit personnel arrive.
- C. Under no circumstance should personnel not assigned to the Explosives Unit attempt to pick up, move, or disturb in any manner any of these items.
- D. In the event of an explosive incident involving a fatality, serious bodily injury, or hospital care, the Explosives Unit will be contacted and respond to the scene.
 - 1. Unless there is an immediate threat to persons, no officers should enter the blast scene prior to Explosives Unit arrival.

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2. Only after Explosives Unit personnel have determined the scene to be safe, will investigators and Crime Scene personnel be allowed to begin processing the scene.

VIII. Fireworks (Commercially Made)

- A. Incidents involving commercial made fireworks may not necessitate response by Explosives Unit.
- B. Fireworks are often discounted as not dangerous because of their small size and low explosive content. However, poor manufacturing quality can often make them unstable. It has also been found that large quantities can make for a large explosion.
- C. In the event of an explosive incident involving a fatality, serious bodily injury, or hospital care, the Explosives Unit will be contacted and respond to the scene.
 1. Unless there is an immediate threat to persons, no officers should enter the blast scene prior to Explosives Unit arrival.
 2. Only after Explosives Unit personnel have determined the scene to be safe, will investigators and Crime Scene personnel be allowed to begin processing the scene.
- D. If there are no injuries involved and the officer confiscates fireworks, the following procedures should be followed:
 1. Photograph all fireworks seized.
 2. Place photographs of fireworks into evidence.
 3. Place seized fireworks into evidence envelope and mark as follows:
 - a. Found Property
 - b. "FIREWORKS – TO BE DESTROYED"
 4. Follow normal procedures for depositing evidence.
- E. In the event that the officer is uncertain of how to properly process or secure explosives evidence, a supervisor should then contact Explosives Unit personnel.

IX. Disclosure of Information

- A. If a bomb is reported or located, officers will refrain from disclosing any specific details of the bomb, including the nature, configuration, triggering methods, explosive(s) used, etc., to any person, including representatives of the news media.

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- B. If the incident is proven to be a bomb threat with no device located, the media will generally have the information. Any other statements concerning the incident will be referred to the Media Relations office.