



4.17 Bomb or Bomb Threat Assessment

In all bomb threat or explosive device situations, to minimize the danger of life and property, all personnel must be prepared to carry out plans for bomb threat incidents when instructed to take immediate action. All principals, teachers, and staff will, on receipt of a bomb threat to their specific school building or discovery of a suspected explosive or incendiary device, immediately initiate EVACUATION guidelines.

Most bomb threats are received either directly or indirectly by telephone. They may arrive as written threats by mail or other means. The procedure for handling the threat will be the same.

In the event that authorities advise of a *dirty bomb* incident, it may be necessary to utilize other School Universal Emergency Response guidelines, as directed by Emergency Responders.

School personnel must be familiar with these guidelines and school emergency plans. Further, plan details and guidelines will be kept in confidence. The documents are not intended for general distribution and should not be published for that purpose.

These guidelines indicate the course of action to be followed upon receipt of a bomb threat. Also, the guidelines are intended to serve as a checklist which may be used by the school principal in the preparation of the school plan.

Guidelines

Please Note: Cellular phones and walkie-talkies should not be used during bomb threats as they may activate an explosive device. However, using hardwired public address systems is permissible.

Immediate response—On receiving a bomb threat by telephone:

Call Taker

- Remains calm, composed, and does not respond in kind to the caller
 - ◆ Listen carefully—do not interrupt!
 - ◆ Try to write the entire message
 - ◆ Try to keep the caller talking as long as possible
 - ◆ After completing the call, hang up and immediately lift the receiver
 - ◆ Press *57 (call trace)

Please note: *57 will only trace the last call received on that line immediately prior to dialing *57

- Utilizes the Bomb Threat Checklist (found at the end of this section or on the Classroom Emergency Flipchart) to obtain as much information as possible and provide copy of checklist and notes to responding law enforcement personnel
- Attempts to activate call trace and notifies law enforcement of trace activation
- Immediately notifies principal of threat and details
- Contact Police at 911
- Notify CSO EST Manager or member and pastor
- Activate School Emergency Response Team



Immediate response—On receiving a bomb threat by e-mail, fax, or other forms of communication:

- Preserve evidence of the threat
- Notify Police at 911
- Make a hard copy immediately if emailed
- Notify CSO EST Manager or member and pastor

Please Note: Cellular phones and walkie-talkies should not be used as they may activate an explosive device.

Incident Commander/Principal

- Assesses the situation, evaluates the threat level, determines best course of action, and implements response actions and protective measures, which may include Evacuation, Stay-in-Place, or sweep/scan of the building
- Ensures 911 call is made, CSO Executive Support Team and pastor notified, and updates provided
- Coordinates response with responding law enforcement agency and follows directions as to appropriate response
- Activates School Emergency Response Team and initiates student/staff accountability procedures, only when safe to do so
- If evacuation is required, assigns staff to sweep/scan evacuation routes and sites if practicable, makes evacuation announcement, follows evacuation procedures, and modifies evacuation routes away from danger zone if necessary.
- If evacuation is not warranted, consider initiation of sweep/scan procedures
- Initiates age-appropriate school announcements and updates, as necessary
- Ensures parent/guardian notification of incident is made at appropriate time. The CSO Executive Support Team PIO/Executive Director of Communications prepares parent notification for principal and review by Executive Support Team Manager
- Refers media inquiries to CSO Executive Support Team PIO/ Executive Director of Communications
- Completes the School Incident Report form and faxes to the Catholic Schools Office

Teachers and Staff

- Notifies principal of any issues relative to the bomb threat and any injuries to students or staff
- Administers first aid, when warranted and safe to do
- Maintains supervision and accounting of students and reports discrepancies
- Follows directions of Incident Commander and public safety personnel



Bomb Threat Assessment

If a bomb threat is called into Catholic Schools Office or local police and is directed at schools in general, the CSO EST, after consulting with local police, will issue orders to the schools characterizing the threat as:

- ⇒ BTR Level 1—Low Risk Profile
- ⇒ BTR Level 2—Medium Risk Profile
- ⇒ BTR Level 3—High Risk Profile

The CSO Executive Support Team shall notify the principal/school leader of general bomb threats and characterize the risk, which will initiate the actions shown in the table below:

Bomb Threat Risk (BTR)	ACTION
BTR Level 1	Monitor building for any suspicious activity. Students and staff remain in the building.
BTR Level 2	Conduct an Evacuation. School-based administrator and security personnel visually inspect the building for suspicious packages or items.
BTR Level 3	Evacuate the building immediately. Local Police will respond and take command of the situation.

Handling a suspicious package: The probability of receiving a bomb in the mail is remote. However, a small number of explosive devices and biological agents have materialized in the mail system. The following are characteristics from the U.S. Postal Inspection Service to help identify a suspect piece of mail:

- Package may have restricted markings like “Personal” or “Private” to one who doesn’t receive personal mail at the office or to someone no longer working as an employee
- Package is sealed with excessive amounts of tape or has an excessive amount of postage on it
- Postmark city different from Return Address city
- Misspelled words, written badly or using letters cut from newspaper or magazine and glue on the package
- Package has wires or aluminum foil sticking out, oil stains, smells weird, or sounds peculiar (sloshing noise)
- Package may feel strange, look uneven or lopsided

If uncertain about a letter or package and unable to verify the sender or contents with the person it is addressed to:

- Do not open it, shake it, bump it, or sniff it!
- Evacuate the area quickly and calmly
- Wash hands with plenty of soap and water
- Call police (911), security, and the U.S. Postal Inspector (1-877-876-2455)
- Complete a list of all people who were near the package or letter in case they are needed for further questioning



Bomb Threat Information

A bomb threat may be delivered via telephone, left on an answering machine, faxed, sent via e-mail, written threat found in school, or be made in a verbal context by a student or other individuals. The threat may be vague, non-specific or may be very specific, such as location, description of the device, and detonation time. All bomb threats must be taken seriously and assessed by school authorities, in concert with law enforcement, to determine the appropriate course of action and response to the threat. Principals and administrative support staff need to be familiar with how to respond to and process information received by the school regarding the bomb threat. Staff needs to be aware of their roles and how they should respond to the threat. Timely notification to law enforcement of all bomb threats is critical as they can provide assistance in determining the legitimacy of the bomb threat and need for evacuation.

Each bomb threat must be thoroughly evaluated and analyzed to determine the appropriate response by the Incident Commander/Principal. **Not all bomb threats require a school evacuation.** A non-specific threat received over the school telephone by what appears to be a young voice with laughter in the background indicating there is a “bomb in the building” may not require a building evacuation due to being a low-level threat. In this situation, it may be more prudent to sweep/scan the building as a precautionary measure as opposed to evacuating the building.

If a decision is made not to evacuate the building due to a low-level threat, it is recommended the Incident Commander place the school in Stay-in-Place status, restrict class changes, and assign sweep/scan teams to search building for suspicious items. The normal school day can continue as long as nothing is found. Immediate EVACUATION should take place if a suspicious package/device is found.

The greater specificity of the bomb threat would be cause for the Incident Commander to evacuate the school building. Factors in analyzing and assessing the specificity of the threat include, but are not limited to the elements below. These factors indicate a higher-level threat and the prudent course of action is to immediately activate the building.

- Recent bomb threats
- Seriousness of the caller’s voice or written communication
- Expressed or discerned motive
- Stated familiarization of the school
- Stated details as to the type of device, location and detonation time

The Incident Commander has the authority to evacuate the building, based on the totality of the circumstances and the safety and well-being of the students and staff. The principal may consult with members of the School Emergency Response Team, CSO Executive Support Team, or law enforcement personnel in making a decision to evacuate. If a decision has been made to evacuate the building, the principal should request that law enforcement K-9 bomb detection team(s) and/or responding officers search the building to ensure the building is clear of any devices and is safe for students and staff to re-enter. This search process can take up to several hours, depending on the availability of search teams and the size of the building.

When an evacuation has occurred and the K-9 bomb detection team(s) or responding officers are either unavailable or significantly delayed in responding to search the building/campus and the



Incident Commander decides to re-enter the building, it is recommended that staff volunteers sweep/scan the building and surrounding campus. The decision to sweep/scan the building without law enforcement assistance should be made in consultation with law enforcement officials and the Catholic Schools Office School Emergency Response Team.

Call Trace Activation

To activate call trace, the telephone must ring at least once (full ring) before answering it. The person receiving the incoming telephone bomb threat should obtain as much information as possible from the caller before the call is concluded. After the call is concluded, the call taker should hang up, immediately lift the receiver, and press *57 for call trace. Activating *57 will only trace the last call received on that specific line prior to dialing call trace. The call taker must inform the responding officers as to the activation of call trace so the officers can obtain any information gleaned by the call trace. Archdiocesan schools should check with their local telephone service provider as to the specific call trace activation number and process.

Electronic Mail or Fax of Bomb Threat

The principal should be advised immediately of a bomb threat received via email and/or by text message in order to assess the threat level and determine the best course of action. In addition, the principal will notify law enforcement authorities, CSO Executive Support Team, and school pastor and ensure the email and the text message is preserved for law enforcement review.

Bomb Sweep/Scan Guidelines

A bomb sweep/scan of the school building and surrounding campus should be considered when there is a low-level bomb threat and the building is not evacuated. During this process, staff volunteers are asked to walk through the building and surrounding campus to detect the presence of any suspicious devices, objects, or packages. Public safety personnel may also assist with this task. Outlined below are steps to be initiated during the sweep/scan process:

- A precautionary sweep/scan of the building is recommended, regardless of how minor the threat level
- A sweep/scan should not be conducted if the Incident Commander feels the threat is so great as to jeopardize the safety of the staff members involved
- Enlist staff volunteers, such as administrators, custodial staff, and School Emergency Response Team members, to participate in the sweep/scan process
- Initiate EVACUATION or Stay-in-Place status and restrict class changes until the sweep/scan process is complete
- Ensure individuals conducting sweep/scan are paired with a person familiar with the building whenever possible
- Prioritize the sweep/scan areas as follows: lobbies, corridors, cafeterias, auditoriums, gyms, stairwells, bathrooms, and outside perimeter of building. Teachers and staff will scan their work areas
- Document in writing: names of the sweep/scan team members, date, time, and location of the scanned area and the findings
- Do not touch or move suspicious items or packages if found
- Scan school visually floor to ceiling and if threat is outside search from ground to sky



Bomb Threat Checklist

Listen Carefully and Keep the Caller Talking

1. Time Call Received _____ 2. Time Call Terminated _____

3. Caller's Name & Address (if known) _____

4. Caller's Sex: Male Female 5. Caller's Age: Adult Child

6. Bomb Facts (Questions to Ask)

- a. When will it explode?
- b. Where is the bomb right now?
- c. What kind of bomb is it?
- d. What does it look like?
- e. Why did you place the bomb?

6. Voice Characteristics

TONE	SPEECH	LANGUAGE
Soft	Fast	Accent
Loud	Slow	Cursing
High Pitch	Lisp	
Low Pitch	Disguised	
	Distorted	
	Raspy	
OTHER:	Stutter	OTHER:
	Nasal	
	Slurred	
	Accent	

7. Background Noise

Background Noise			
Music	Children	Traffic	Typing
Voices	Cell Phone	Machines	Quiet
OTHER:			

8. Person Receiving Call: _____
Work Station: _____
Date: _____