

Community Relations

BOMB THREATS

When a Bomb Threat is Received

The first consideration is the safety and welfare of students. Therefore, a determination of whether to evacuate the school building should be made as early as possible. The principal or designee should make this determination, in cooperation with the police if time presents. Keeping in mind the need to make a decision regarding evacuation as early as possible, the following counsel is given to principals faced with a bomb threat:

1. Call the police and fire department. Generally speaking, all bomb threats should be reported.
2. The police will want as much of the following information as possible:
 - a. name of the person placing the call, the school represented, and the staff position of the caller
 - b. telephone number of the school
 - c. how the caller found out about the suspected bomb
 - d. exactly where the bomb is supposed to be located (if known)
 - e. the time the bomb is set to go off (if known)
 - f. size of the bomb and type of explosive used (if known)
 - g. sex of the person calling in the threat
 - h. approximate age of the person calling in the threat
 - i. distinguishing voice characteristics
 - j. exact words used by person calling in the threat
 - k. any other information that may help to identify the person who made the threat
3. Call the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent. (There are some circumstances under which the Principal and Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent may have to use their judgment with regard to bringing in the police.)

Upon receiving notice of a bomb threat at a school, the initial response will normally be made by the following:

1. a police officer/sheriff's deputy
2. a representative of the fire department

Decision

The principal or designee in charge should consult with police and fire representatives and rely on their expertise. **However, it shall be the decision of the school Principal or his designee as to whether the school should be evacuated or not.**

Evacuation Procedure

1. Evacuate the building at least 20 minutes prior to the time of detonation, if know.
2. In cases of inclement weather, the Principal should exercise judgment about students going to their lockers for outerwear. Also, in inclement weather, if a particular location for a bomb is announced, a decision might be made to evacuate that area only or to evacuate everyone to an unaffected indoor area such as a gym.³

Note: Consideration should be given to the probability that an explosive device might be wired to a locker door.

3. **Direct all persons at least 350 feet away from the building.**
4. Teachers should carry the class roll book, call the roll, and report anyone missing to the principal.
5. **Do not reoccupy the building until 20 minutes after the suspected time of detonation.**

Announcing the Evacuation

The announcement should be made without using the word “bomb,” which may be a possible cause of panic.

Important: A fire drill should not be held. Repeat. A fire drill should not be held. This will result in the closing of windows and doors. Windows and doors must be left open, as this will dissipate any blast, and facilitate search operations.
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The following announcement is suggested:

“This is an emergency evacuation drill. Please follow your teacher’s directions and leave the building using the same routes as a fire drill. Remain orderly. Leave all classroom windows and doors open.”

The Search Operation

Police may conduct a search of the building. This carries implications for staff personnel in the school. Please review carefully:

1. Shut off all electric motors, office machines, etc. To avoid any humming or ticking noises which may interfere with locating a possible bomb.

Board Policy 1415(c)

2. The police may need to ascertain the following information from some teachers:
 - a. does everything appear in order?
 - b. are any items added to the room which were not there previously?
 - c. was the room unattended for any length of time prior to the bomb threat?
 - d. were any broken windows found in the room prior to the bomb threat?

The police may also need to:

- a. check with the school custodian as to the time he opened the building and whether it was found secured
- b. search all public areas inside the building
- c. check facilities such as furnace rooms, storage areas, which are normally not used by persons
- d. check outside area such as behind shrubbery, ledges or ornamental facings, trash cans, and suspicious vehicles parked near the building

What to do if you suspect you have located the bomb before police arrive:

1. evacuate the building immediately, if not previously done
2. **do not touch** – many bombs can be triggered by the slightest movement
3. notify the police that a bomb may have been discovered
4. keep all unauthorized persons out of the danger area

Important: Do not use a walkie talkie or radio transmission equipment to report location of the suspected bomb. May types of explosives can be detonated by the use of a radio transmitter. Because of the possible danger involved, no discretion is permissible.

The Principal of the school is charged with the responsibility of making these procedures available to all school personnel (including secretaries, custodians, and cafeteria personnel) and discussing the procedures with them. This should be done on an annual basis.

A member of the administrative team (and an alternate in the case of his absence) should be given responsibility for directing the implementation of these procedures, assigning responsibilities as appropriate to other school personnel, and maintaining overall control in the event of an emergency.

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