



Division 09

Special Operations

Chapter 02 – Bomb Squad Response to Bombing/ Explosive Incidents

February 2009

POLICY

This General Order shall establish procedures to effectively utilize the Bomb Squad and Explosive Detection Canine Teams and to provide emergency response procedures for the Fire/ EMS Department personnel when responding to a bombing/ bomb threat or explosive related incident.

DEFINITIONS

Bomb Threat – any incident in which there has been nothing more than a communicated threat or statement about the use an explosive device, with the exception of vehicle threats. Threats to vehicles will be classified as a suspicious item.

Unidentified/Suspicious Item - an item or object that appears normal; however, may be unattended, unexpected or unidentifiable, or has

- suspected characteristics of an explosive device, or
- involves suspicious circumstances regarding the location, placement, or delivery of the item, or
- an individual has a reason to believe the item may be a confirmed device.

Confirmed Device – an item, which has been examined by a Bomb Technician and deemed to pose an explosive hazard or other harm.

Explosion or Post Detonation – any incident involving an explosion or the discovery of a device after it has detonated.

Bomb Squad Commander - The Bomb Squad will be commanded by an individual appointed by the Fire Chief. That individual is responsible for coordinating the administrative and operational duties of the Bomb Squad. This individual will normally serve as the “Bomb Group” officer on the scene on explosives related incidents. The radio designation for the Bomb Squad Commander is “Car 154”.

Assistant Bomb Squad Commander – The Assistant Bomb Squad Commander will be appointed by the Bomb Squad Commander and approved by the Fire Chief or his/her designee. This individual is designated to act on behalf of the Bomb Squad Commander in his/her absence or should the Bomb Squad need to be split into multiple teams for operational purposes. In addition, this individual will assist the Bomb Squad Commander with the administrative and operational duties of the Bomb Squad.

Bomb Technician – A Bomb Technician is an individual who has completed a specialized course of instruction through the Federal Bureau of Investigations Hazardous Devices School.

Team Member - The Bomb Squad consists of career personnel operating under the Fire/ EMS Department’s Office of Fire Investigations/ Homeland Security. These individuals are appointed by the Fire Chief. Each member of the Bomb Squad is required to meet fundamental training requirements, set forth by the Federal Bureau of Investigations Hazardous Devices School, in



order to maintain certification as a Bomb Technician. Specific training requirements and performance standards for Bomb Squad members will be established by the Bomb Squad Commander and approved by the Fire Chief or his/her designee.

Canine Team Coordinator - This individual will assist the Bomb Squad Commander with administrative duties related to the operation of the Explosives Detection Canine Teams (EDCT). This individual will coordinate the training activities of the EDCT. This individual will ensure that the requirements and procedures outlined by the Bomb Squad Commander are followed by all canine teams and will make monthly reports to him/her on the activities of the EDCT.

Explosive Detection Canine Team - An Explosives Detection Canine Team (EDCT) consist of a career canine handler and one canine that have successfully completed a course of instruction in scent discrimination and location work for explosives. These teams are appointed by the Fire Chief or his designee.

PROCEDURES

1. General Information

Mission

The Fire/EMS Department strives to improve the quality of life in Prince George's County by promoting safety, and providing the highest quality of fire prevention, fire protection, emergency medical services, and community outreach programs.

Vision

The actions of the Fire/EMS Department will be guided by an understanding of the needs of our customers, while we ensure the highest

commitment to safety, professionalism, integrity, and care.

2. Overview / Recognition

The Bomb Squad is a unit within the Office of Fire Investigations/ Homeland Security, which falls under the Fire Prevention Command.

3. Duties/ Responsibilities

Bomb Squad Duties and Responsibilities

- The Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department's Bomb Squad is responsible for the render safe and/or removal, transportation, storage and disposal of suspected or confirmed explosive devices, incendiary devices, explosives, explosive chemicals, pyrotechnics and unstable ammunition.
- The unit also works with the Hazardous Materials Team to provide support in the mitigation of chemical, biological or nuclear incidents.
- In addition, this unit also works in conjunction with the Fire Investigations unit in conducting post blast crime scene investigations, collection and preservation of bombing evidence, preparing and providing court testimony and providing technical support for special operations.

Bomb Technician Duties and Responsibilities

- Maintain proficiency with specialized bomb disposal tools and equipment.
- Prepare and participate in explosives related training programs.
- Develop agency emergency response plans for bomb threats, actual



improvised explosive devices and bombing crime scenes.

- Maintain professional liaison with other State and local Bomb Squads, military EOD units, Federal agencies and professional organizations.
- Provide protection support for dignitary visits and special events.
- Develop and deliver training programs to various outside agencies on explosives related topics.
- Compile and report technical data on explosive devices and incidents.
- Maintain familiarity with a library of technical publications and other explosives related material.
- Participate in community events and interact with the citizens to promote explosives safety awareness.

4. Incident Response Procedures

Notification/Dispatch

- Bomb Threat:
 - The on-duty Bomb Technician will be notified of the incident by Public Safety Communications.
 - The on-duty Bomb Technician will make contact with the appropriate individuals in order to evaluate the validity of the threat.
 - The on-duty Bomb Technician will determine the level of response, if any, to the incident and advise Public Safety Communications.
- Unidentified/Suspicious Item:
 - Public Safety Communications will notify the on-duty Bomb Technician and the appropriate Battalion Chief/Duty Officer

of the incident.

- The on-duty Bomb Technician will make contact with the appropriate individuals and/or respond to the scene in order to evaluate the unidentified/suspicious item.
 - The on-duty Bomb Technician will determine the level of response, if any, to the incident and advise Public Safety Communications.
- Confirmed Device (Pre-Detonation/Pre-Arrival of Bomb Squad):
 - Units will be dispatched by Public Safety Communications in accordance with General Order 03-11, Standard Response/Dispatch Procedures.
 - First Arriving Fire/EMS Units shall report to a location designated by the Bomb Squad "On Duty" Technician and establish a "Level II Staging" area for Fire Suppression and EMS units.
 - First Arriving Fire/EMS Units shall survey the designated area to ensure that it is in a safe location based on the evacuation distances listed in Attachment #1 *Explosives Threat Evacuation Distance Guide*.
 - Under no circumstances are personnel to approach the area of the suspect device without specific approval of the Bomb Squad Commander.
 - All personnel shall remain on the apparatus and await the arrival of the Fire Department Bomb Squad



- Suppression Personnel shall provide a pre-plan drawing and area map of the incident location to arriving Bomb Squad personnel.
- **Personnel should be aware of the possibility of secondary devices that target first responders.**
- Confirmed Device (Post-Detonation/ Pre-Arrival of Bomb Squad):
 - Should a detonation occur prior to the arrival of the Bomb Squad, or if units are initially dispatched for a reported explosion, personnel should take the following actions:
 - Survey the blast area for unsafe conditions from a protected area. Evacuate all people from the area and establish control zones
 - Wear full protective clothing and utilize Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) for any activities in the hot zone.
 - Conduct a rapid assessment to identify the potential for chemical, biological or radiological involvement.
 - Estimate the number of casualties and activate the mass casualty incident procedures.
 - Do not disturb any potential evidence. Protect and mark in place when possible.
 - **Personnel should be aware of the possibility of secondary devices that target first responders.**
- Other Explosion/Unconfirmed Device (Post- Detonation):
 - Units will be dispatched by Public Safety Communications in accordance with General Order 03-11, Standard Response/Dispatch Procedures. Assignments may be enhanced based on the information provided by the reporting person(s).
 - Command Officer shall report to the designated "Level II Staging" area for Fire Suppression and EMS units and ensure that the Incident Management System (IMS) is established in accordance with General Order 06-20, Incident Management System.
 - Under no circumstances are personnel to approach the area of the suspect device without specific approval of the Bomb Squad Commander.
 - Ensure that all personnel remain on their apparatus and await the arrival of the Fire Department's Bomb Squad.
 - **Personnel should be aware of the possibility of secondary devices that target first responders.**

5. Safety on Explosion Scenes

Structures that have sustained explosions are often more structurally damaged than a burned building. The possibility of a building collapse is much greater and should always be considered. In case of fuel, gas, or dust explosions, secondary explosions are the rule rather than the exception. Explosion scenes that involve bombing or explosives have added danger. Personnel should be aware of



secondary devices and undetonated explosives.

When an incendiary or explosive device is discovered that has not activated, do not move it! Bomb Squad personnel are the only personnel authorized to handle such devices. Touching or moving such device may result in an ignition or explosion. All devices should be considered to be active and dangerous until otherwise determined by a member of the Department's Bomb Squad. Every precaution should be taken to protect lives and property when dealing with an incendiary or explosive device.

6. Incident Management

Bombing/Explosive Incidents are to be treated as crime scenes, unless otherwise directed. Due to the sensitive nature of these incidents, and the likely response of many different agencies, a unified Command Post will most likely be established. The location of the Command Post will be coordinated with the ranking bomb technician and the incident commander. Under no circumstances shall the Command Post be within 300 feet of the suspected device of post blast scene. This distance shall be increased appropriately based on the type and nature of the threat in accordance with the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department Explosive Threat Evacuation Guide.

To ensure that the potential crime scene is managed properly, and the lives of responding personnel are not endangered by secondary devices, etc., the ranking Bomb Squad Technician or Command Officer from the Fire Investigations/Homeland Security Office will be represented within the Unified Command Structure.

REFERENCES

N/A

FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

Prince George's County Fire/Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Department's Explosive Threat Evacuation Guide