

Policies & Procedures

Policy Title: Response to a Bomb Threat

Policy # 802

Date Issued: March 2013

I. POLICY:

It is the policy of the Southern Poverty Law Center to limit exposure to the risk of injury for all staff and visitors in the event of a bomb threat.

II. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to clearly outline the procedure when there is any risk involving an explosive device or threat of the presence of a bomb. The bomb threat procedures include: a plan to identify bomb threats; respond calmly and efficiently to threats; and quickly and safely evacuate all employees and visitors from areas affected by such threats.

III. PROCEDURE:

Any emergency response policy is only as good as the planning that goes into it, and the ability and willingness of those affected to execute the procedures instinctively and without question. In an emergency, there is no time to discuss what the best escape route might be, nor is there time to convince people of the need to respond. Therefore, all employees, interns, visitors, vendors, service providers and contract workers who are inside the Southern Poverty Law Center at the time of a bomb threat will follow the actions outlined in this policy.

A. Identifying Bomb Threats:

Not all bomb threats will be verbally pre-announced such as with a telephonically communicated threat. Sometimes they are unknowingly communicated by the actions of the perpetrators. A safe and successful evacuation plan hinges upon our ability to effectively identify the threat. Performing a threat analysis to review the most common type of menace will enable us to respond with a common sense approach.

B. Threat Analysis:

The following are types of warnings with which SPLC must be positioned to deal:

1. Telephone Threats

Telephone bomb threats may involve the claim that a device or package has been or will be planted in the SPLC complex. While Telephone threats are easily identified, these threats are sometimes very difficult to accurately describe and communicate to others. The Telephone Bomb Threat Checklist which appears at the end of this policy statement should be located at every SPLC phone and used in any instance of a threatening phone call.

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2. Mail Threats:

The U.S. Postal Service has identified several characteristics of a package that should be treated as a potential threat. These are packages which have:

- 1) no return address, sloppy or incorrect addressing;
- 2) excessive postage;
- 3) wire protruding from, or visible through the wrapping; and/or
- 4) oily stains on the wrapping.

While items (1) or (2) in isolation may not be cause for alarm, in conjunction with any of the other factors, they do identify a package requiring further examination. Items 3 or 4, even in isolation, are cause for concern.

3. Vehicular Bombing Threats/Attempts

Although SPLC security professionals are trained to identify and report suspicious vehicle activity, *everyone* in the Center must be alert and be capable of recognizing and reporting potential vehicular threats. Staff must report any suspicious vehicles to the Chief of Security or the closest Security Officer.

The following characteristics should cause you to monitor and report suspicious vehicles:

- a) Vehicles which make repeated slow speed passes by the Center in which the occupants are obviously not interested in the Civil Rights Memorial but appear to be concerned with our security measures or the activities of SPLC employees or guests.
- b) Vehicles with no license plate that have suspicious looking occupants.
- c) A clean vehicle with a dirty license plate or a clean license plate on a dirty vehicle. Either may indicate a stolen license plate and/or vehicle.
- d) An unoccupied vehicle which you don't recognize parked in a no parking zone adjacent to the Center.

C. Responding to Bomb Threats

Once a potential threat has been identified, the following preplanned responses must be executed immediately, without question, or deviation.

1. Response to a Telephone Threat

Several key principles guide your reaction to a telephone bomb threat.

- a) Remain calm – An excited or emotional reaction will only hinder a reasonable response.

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- b) Get as much information as possible from the caller. Follow the Telephone Bomb checklist at Attachment 1, by asking questions which might identify who the caller is, why, where, and when did they place the device, what type of device was placed and how will it detonate.
 - 1) Listen very carefully to both the caller's spoken words as well as any background noises which might identify the caller's location (i.e. vehicle or railroad traffic, children crying in the background, sirens, etc.).
 - 2) Note the caller's accent and demeanor. Asking these questions give the police and Security valuable information as well as keeping the caller on the line so that a trace can be attempted.
 - c) Note what line a call comes in on. If you are unable to keep the caller on the line long enough to alert someone to initiate a trace, the only way to trace the call is to know which line the call came in on.
 - d) After noting the line the call came in on, and determining the caller is making a bomb threat, covertly notify a nearby worker that you have a bomb threat in progress. Do this by holding your hand above your head giving a "thumbs down" gesture. This gesture should be recognized by all employees as the universal sign for a telephonic bomb threat in progress.
 - e) Notify your immediate supervisor and the Chief of Security immediately after initiating a trace.
 - f) Unless the caller said that detonation is imminent, all personnel should perform an immediate visual assessment of their work areas. Things to look for include:
 - 1) Packages or boxes that wouldn't normally be in your area.
 - 2) Brief cases, attachés, satchels, gym bags, etc. that you have not seen before and don't know where they came from.
 - 3) Other objects that look "out of place" or unusual.
 - g) If you find such a suspicious object, Do Not Attempt To Move or Search it! Note its exact location, report it to your supervisor and /or the Chief of Security and evacuate the area.
2. Responding to a Mail Bomb Threat

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If visual inspection or scanning identifies a letter or package as being suspect, take the following actions:

- a) Do not move or handle the piece of mail any further. Security will handle it.
- b) Contact the Chief or the Assistant Chief of Security immediately. One of these individuals will respond and assess the package. They will determine if it constitutes a threat and if an evacuation is needed.
- c) Ask others to stay away from the package. Do not allow anyone other than those identified in paragraph (2) to touch or handle the package.
- d) If requested to do so, evacuate the area.

3. Responding to a Vehicular Bomb Threat

The nature of this type of attack requires very quick and efficient reactions. Once a threat has been identified, all personnel will be notified immediately and must respond to Security's evacuation code. Several factors govern your response to this type of threat.

- a) You must respond immediately! Drop everything you're doing, hang-up the phone, cut short your conversation and go to your pre-designated evacuation site.
- b) If there are guests, visitors, or donors in your area, do not tell them that there is a bomb threat. Simply explain: "For security reasons you must come with me immediately." Once in the designated evacuation site, then you may inform them of that there has been a threat.
- c) Members of the Security Department are responsible for conducting the evacuation.

GUIDELINE:

- A. The Southern Poverty Law Center must evaluate potential threats and plan sound emergency response procedures appropriate to those threats.
- B. Every SPLC employee must be knowledgeable regarding specific threats and the appropriate response procedures.
- C. There will be routine employee practices sessions for these procedures. During an actual emergency there is no time to "work out the bugs."
- D. In order to maintain a safe and secure workplace, everyone must respond to both *actual* and *exercise* bomb threats "by the book...every time!" A casual, lackadaisical, or non-supportive response to an exercise could lead to the same response during an actual situation. Quick, decisive action will save

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lives in the event of an actual bomb threat. Practicing the game like you will play it is the only way to guarantee the instant required response.

- E. The goal of this plan is to keep staff and visitors safe. Understanding and supporting these procedures are essential to their success. SPLC's plan has four major elements, and every employee is obligated to know what the elements are and what the proper reaction is in each situation.
1. Threat Awareness: Know the three types of threats:
 - a) Telephone
 - b) Mail
 - c) Vehicle

 1. Threat Identification: Know how to identify these threats, before something happens.

 2. Threat Reporting: Know how to sound the alarm by notifying security or initiating an evacuation yourself if the situation warrants it.

 3. Threat Response: Know what actions are expected of you and execute them as planned.

REFERENCES:

- Telephone Bomb Threat Checklist

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Telephone Bomb Threat Checklist

Phone # Call Received @	Date	Time	Length of Call
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Important Questions to Ask the Caller

1. When will the device explode?
2. Where is the device?
3. What does it look like?
4. What kind of bomb is it?
5. What will cause it to explode?
6. Is there anything we can do to prevent it exploding?
7. Did you place the bomb?
8. Why was it placed at the SPLC?
9. Are you with any organized group?
10. Where are you now?
11. What is your name?

Information about Caller: To specify gender > Check gray box immediately to the left of male or female

	Male		Female	Approx Age:	Accent
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Caller's Demeanor: Check appropriate box immediately to the left of the descriptions below

	Caller's Voice	Caller's Speech	Background Noises		
	Calm		Slurred		Street (cars etc.)
	Angry		Stutter		Airplanes
	Excited		Lisp		Other Voices
	Soft		Raspy		PA System
	Laughing		Ragged		Music
	Crying		Clearing Throat		House (dishes, tv, etc.)
	Normal		Deep Breathing		Motor (fan, a/c, etc.)
	Distinct		Well-spoken (educated)		Office Machinery
	Foul		Recorded Message		Factory Machinery
	Irrational		Disguised		Animals
	Incoherent		Rapid		Clear
	Nasal		Taped Conversation		Static (weak signal)
	Heavy		Foul Language		Phone Booth
	Slow		Foreign		Other (Specify)

After Hanging Up

1. Immediately dial 8296 (Security Operations Center)
2. Notify your supervisor
3. Prepare to evacuate if ordered to do so

Your Name: _____ Dept: _____ Date: _____ Extension: _____

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