



BOMB THREATS - POLICY & PROCEDURES

1. Introduction

Following on from NaCTSO's guidance and advice to schools and other educational establishments the following policy and procedures have been drawn up for all staff and pupils to follow.

2. Procedures to follow on receipt of a bomb threat

2.1 Communication of the threat

A bomb threat can be communicated in a number of different ways. The threat is likely to be made in person over the telephone; however, it may also be a recorded message, communicated in written form, delivered face-to-face or, increasingly, sent by email or social media (e.g. Twitter or Instagram, etc.). A threat may be communicated via a third-party, i.e. a person or organisation unrelated to the intended victim and identified only to pass the message.

2.2. Immediate steps upon receipt of a bomb threat

Any member of staff with a direct telephone line, mobile phone, computer or tablet etc., could conceivably receive a bomb threat. Such staff should, therefore, understand the actions required of them as the potential first response to a threat message.

If you receive a telephone threat you should:

- stay calm and listen carefully
- have immediate access to a checklist on key information that should be recorded – **see the attached**
- **if practical, keep the caller talking and alert a colleague to dial 999**
- if displayed on your phone, note the number of the caller, otherwise, dial 1471 to obtain the number once the call has ended
- if the threat is a recorded message write down as much detail as possible
- If the threat is received via text message do not reply to, forward or delete the message. Note the number of the sender and follow police advice
- contact The Head/Deputy Head and The Bursar upon receipt of the threat. They will need to make an assessment of the threat

If the threat is delivered face-to-face:

- try to remember as many distinguishing characteristics of the threat-maker as possible

If discovered in a written note, letter or as graffiti:

- treat as police evidence and stop other people touching the item

If the threat is received via email or social media application:

- do not reply to, forward or delete the message
- note the sender's email address or username/user ID for social media applications
- preserve all web log files for your organisation to help the police investigation (as a guide, 7 days prior to the threat message and 48 hours after)

ENSURE THAT 999 HAS BEEN DIALLED AND FOLLOW THE ADVICE GIVEN BY THE POLICE.

2.3 Assessing the credibility of bomb threats Evaluating the credibility of a threat is a critical task, particularly if the attack being threatened is imminent. This is a tactic used to place additional pressure on decision makers. Police will assess the threat at the earliest opportunity. When specific intelligence is known to police, advice will be issued accordingly; however, in the absence of detailed information, it will be necessary to consider a number of factors:-

- is the threat part of a series? If so, what has happened elsewhere or previously?
- can the location of the claimed bomb(s) be known with precision? If so, is a bomb visible at the location identified?
- considering the hoaxer's desire to influence behaviour, is there any reason to believe their words?
- if the threat is imprecise, could an external evacuation inadvertently move people closer to the hazard?
- is a suspicious device visible?

2.4 Actions to consider

External evacuation

Leaving the venue will be appropriate when directed by police and/or it is reasonable to assume the threat is credible, and when evacuation will move people towards a safer location.

Designated Fire Marshals will assist with this procedure (and utilise Fire evacuation procedures in order to account for all evacuees) to the area advised by the police which will depend on the location (if any) of the suspicious item. As with Fire Alarm procedures no one else should be allowed to enter the area once an evacuation has been initiated.

The police will establish cordons depending upon the size of an identified suspect device. Always follow police directions and avoid assembly close to a police cordon.

Internal or inwards evacuation ('invacuation')

There are occasions when it is safer to remain inside. Staying inside and moving away from external windows/walls is relevant when it is known that a bomb is not within or immediately adjacent to your building.

If the suspect device is outside people may be exposed to greater danger if the evacuation route inadvertently takes them past the device and a safer alternative may be the use of internal protected spaces such as the sports hall.

If the location of the device threatened is unknown, evacuation represents a credible and justifiable course of action.

Decision not to evacuate or inwardly evacuate

If, after an evaluation by the Head/Deputy Head/Bursar, the threat is deemed implausible (e.g. a deliberate hoax) then an evacuation/invacuation may be ruled out. In such circumstances the advice provided by the police should be followed. All staff should be familiar with their work areas and their immediate surroundings in order to identify anything out of place, see search considerations below.

Checking for suspicious items - Search considerations

Regular searches of the premises should be undertaken by the Facilities Manager. Additionally, if a bomb threat is received and depending upon how credible it is, a 'search' for suspicious items should be carefully undertaken by the Facilities Manager and the Groundsman. To that end:

- After notifying the Head/Deputy Head/Bursar an external search will be undertaken by the Facilities Manager and the Groundsman whilst other members of staff will carefully review their immediate work areas
- areas that are open to the public should be searched first; enclosed areas (e.g. cloakrooms, stairs, corridors, lifts etc.) evacuation routes and assembly points, car parks and other external areas
- **under no circumstances should any suspicious item be touched or moved in any way. If a suspicious item is located then dial 999 and commence immediate evacuation**

2.5 Media & communication

Avoid revealing details about specific incidents to the media or through social media without prior consultation with police. Do not provide details of the threat, the decision making process relating to evacuation (internal or external) or why a decision not to evacuate was taken.

Releasing details of the circumstances may:

- be an objective of the hoaxer and provide them with a perceived credibility
- cause unnecessary alarm to others
- be used by those planning to target other venues
- elicit copycat incidents
- adversely affect the subsequent police investigation

For further information visit www.nactso.gov.uk or www.cpni.gov.uk