

Health and Safety Programs

Bomb Threat

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What is a bomb threat?

A bomb threat or bomb scare is a threat, usually verbal or written, to detonate an explosive or incendiary device to cause property damage, death, injury, and fear, whether or not such a device actually exists.

What are examples of bomb threats?

Bomb threats can come in a variety of ways, including:

- Texts / SMS
- Phone calls
- Social media postings
- Unidentified packages left or received at a worksite
- A suspicious object left in a public area
- Handwritten note, memo, or letter

What do I do if I receive a bomb threat?

Remain calm (although it might be difficult), notify the authorities, and follow checklist guidance for phone call bomb threats, such as:

- Keep the caller on the line for as long as possible.
 - Listen attentively (if possible) for any unique sounds, background noise, or caller's voice over the phone.
 - Do not hang up.
 - Signal to someone else or pass a note for someone to listen in on the conversation and notify authorities.
 - Record the call (if possible).
 - Take as much information as possible. Try to note the following:
 - If the speaker is male or female.
 - If the speaker has a distinctive accent.
 - If the voice is disguised, muffled, or strange-sounding.
 - If the voice is shrill or deep.
 - Any background noises (e.g., traffic, bus passing, bell ringing, printer sounds).
 - Call the police and facility management as soon as possible.
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What do I do if I suspect a bomb?

If you are suspicious that a letter or package may contain a bomb, you may refuse to accept it.

If it is already on your premises:

- DO NOT SHAKE OR OPEN IT.
 - Isolate it.
 - Evacuate all persons from the area immediately.
 - Do not put the item in water or a confined space, such as a desk drawer or filing cabinet.
 - Follow your workplace procedure or call for police assistance.
 - Wait in a safe location.
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What do I do if I find a suspicious package?

If you have been notified of a bomb threat:

- Do not touch any suspicious package.
 - If a suspicious package is found, leave the area and notify the police immediately.
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- If you have been evacuated from a building, avoid standing in front of windows or other potentially hazardous areas. Do not block the sidewalk or street. It will need to be kept clear for emergency officials.
- In the case of an explosion, get out of the building as quickly and calmly as possible. If items fall off bookshelves or from the ceiling, get under a sturdy table or desk until the situation stabilizes enough for your safe passage. Ensure your own safety before trying to help others.
- Making a bomb threat is a criminal offence. Do not try to guess whether the threat is real or a hoax. Call the police.

Please see the OSH Answers “[Handling Suspicious Mail](#)” for more information.

Is having a bomb threat response procedure necessary?

Under Canadian legislation, each [jurisdiction](#) is responsible for developing emergency response procedures in consultation with the health and safety committee (or health and safety representative) to identify and address all foreseeable emergency situations, including bomb threats. Employers should ensure that:

- A comprehensive emergency response procedure (in consultation with local police authorities) to deal with bomb threats has been developed.
 - Procedures are communicated with all employees, identifying key roles in a bomb threat emergency.
 - Emergency drills are conducted for bomb threats.
 - Practice drills are documented.
 - Evacuation procedures are in place, as may be necessary.
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