6. BOMB THREAT PROCEDURES - THREAT OF AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

BOMB OR SUBSTANCE THREATS

Although most bomb threats are hoaxes aimed at causing disruption to the normal day-to-day routine of an organisation, they must be taken seriously. The most common form of threat is by telephone, warning that a bomb has been placed in a building.

The procedures used have been developed on the assumption that all threats will be treated as genuine until investigation proves otherwise. The aim of these procedures is twofold:

1. To take all practical steps to safeguard life,
2. To ensure that unnecessary actions are not taken which may put at risk the students and staff that we are attempting to safeguard.

Although in most instances the threat made will be a hoax, usually by telephone, there is always the very real possibility that it may not be. Hoax calls are generally made by a person who remains anonymous and is making such calls for personal gain and satisfaction knowing that such calls can cause major disruption and inconvenience. Faculty and Departments, together with Heads of Schools would be targets to receive such calls. The person who notifies of a real threat will generally provide much more detail, possibly including identification to ensure that the threat is taken seriously.

Procedures listed in this section are general rules but because of the potential harm to the University and its occupants, all threats must be taken very seriously and the procedures strictly adhered to. Built into such procedures will be the minimisation of media publicity as this type of exposure to such threats tends to increase their frequency.

Bomb threats may be in one of the following forms:

1. Written threat
2. Telephone threat
3. Doubtful or Suspect Article

1. **Written threat**

If a bomb threat is received in writing it should be kept including any envelope or container. Once a message is recognised as a bomb threat further unnecessary handling should be avoided. Every possible effort should be made to retain evidence for possible fingerprints, handwriting or typing, paper and postmarks. Such evidence should be protected by placing it in an envelope, preferably plastic.
Immediately report the bomb threat to University Security on 8344 6666 and also to your supervisor. Do NOT activate the fire alarm or emergency evacuation system unless instructed to by the Police.

Such threats will undergo basic validation criteria in order to rank their potentiality and the Police will be in the best position to judge this. As a general rule of thumb, the more detail contained in the threat wording combined with a willingness to mention names and reasons will be deemed to be a more "genuine" threat than one that provides only the slightest of details.

2. Telephone threat

An accurate analysis of the telephone threat can provide valuable information on which to base recommendations, action and subsequent investigations. The person receiving the bomb threat by telephone should not disconnect the call and, as soon as possible, complete the information required on the bomb threat checklist.

1. Immediately report the call using another telephone to University Security on 8344 6666 and the bomb threat to your supervisor.

2. If examinations are being held in the building under threat the call must also be reported to the Student Administration 8344 8022.

3. Do NOT activate the fire alarm or emergency evacuation system unless instructed to by the Police.

Such threats will undergo basic validation criteria in order to rank their potentiality and the Police will be in the best position to judge this. As a general rule of thumb, the more detail contained in the threat language combined with a willingness to mention names and reasons will be deemed to be a more "genuine" threat than one that provides only the slightest of details.

Typical Phone Threat Questions

If you receive a bomb or substance phone threat, you should try to ask these types of questions (only a small sample):

1. What is it?

2. When is the bomb going to explode? Or when will the substance be released?

3. Where did you put it?

4. What does it look like?

5. When did you put it there?

6. How will the bomb explode? Or how will the substance be released?

7. Did you put it there?
8. Why did you put it there?

A handy phone threat checklist should be kept near your phone to use if you find yourself in this situation.

3. Doubtful or Suspect Article

The threat of explosive or contaminated mail being sent to the University is very real in the light of current world-wide terrorism. To combat this possibility you should have in place appropriate guidelines and measures to assist staff that handle suspicious mail.

Ask yourself, does the doubtful or unattended item represent a potential threat to yourself, your colleagues or the University of Melbourne? Carefully analyse the item for a combination of any of the factors listed below. Ensure you do not touch or move the item at any time.

Is it a Suspicious Article?

- Is it hidden?
- Is it obviously suspicious?
- Is it typical of your work area?
- Has there been unauthorised access?
- Has there been a perimeter breach?

Is it Hazardous or Suspicious Mail?

- Excessive securing material?
- Excessive weight?
- Protruding wires or foil?
- Lopsided or unevenly weighted?
- Oily stains or visible powder and crystals?
- Stiff or rigid envelope?
- Is the package or mail expected?
- Visual distractions on the packaging?
- Excessive postage?
- Proper names and titles not used?
- Address handwritten or poorly typed?
• Restrictive markings eg: "Confidential"?
• Common words misspelt?
• External or foreign mail?
• Lacks sender address?

Emergency Procedures

If you believe a letter or parcel is suspicious and you have NOT opened it:

• DO NOT open it, or shake it.
• Place the parcel/letter into a plastic bag and seal it. Place this bag into another plastic bag and seal it.
• Stay in your immediate environment and prevent others from entering the area.
• DO turn off any personal fans in the immediate area.
• DO call for help. Contact Security on 8344 6666 and your supervisor.
• DO wash your hands if you are able to access facilities in your immediate area.
• DO NOT touch your face with your hands or any part of your body that has open wounds.

If you HAVE opened a letter or parcel that contains suspicious powder:

• DO cover the object without touching or disturbing it further by upending your garbage bin and placing it over the top.
• If any material has spilt from the item, DO NOT try to clean it up.
• DO NOT brush powder off your clothing or off any other surface.
• DO turn off any personal fans in the immediate area.
• Stay in your immediate environment and prevent others from entering the area.
• Ensure that co-workers in the same room also stay put.
• DO wash your hands if you are able to access facilities in your immediate area.
• DO NOT touch your face with your hands or any part of your body that has open wounds.
• DO call for help. Contact Security on 8344 6666 and your supervisor.
If you suspect the mail item may contain an explosive device:

- DO NOT touch it, or move it.
- Ring Security on 8344 6666 and report the package.
- Evacuate the area if the device indicates it may detonate soon, otherwise, stay nearby behind a solid barrier and prevent others from entering the area.
- Wait for Police to arrive to tell them where the device is.

THREAT OF AGGRESSIVE OR VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR, CIVIL DISTURBANCE

In the event of being confronted by an aggressive or potentially violent person:

1. Try to remain calm.
2. Alert supervisor.
3. Be firm but polite with the person and let them know that their behaviour is not acceptable.
4. If the behaviour of the person is such that outside intervention is required, contact Security on ext 46666.
5. You should not feel obliged to rectify the situation on your own. The Security staff are trained to handle these situations.
6. Abusive phone calls: hang up the phone and notify your supervisor. If calls persist, contact the Manager, Telephone Systems.
7. Security telephones, placed at strategic points on campus, are identified by a blue light and connect direct to security at central control 24 hours a day.

INJURY

1. Move injured person away from danger if safe to do so.
2. Call ambulance on 0-000. State the location clearly. Have someone meet the ambulance outside the building.
3. Security staff are trained in first aid, ext 46666, 24 hrs a day. There are also departmental staff trained in first aid (http://www.ms.unimelb.edu.au/resources/safety/).
4. Student Health can provide emergency assistance during the hours 8.45 am to 5 pm; phone 46904 or 46905.

5. First aid advice is found in the First Aid Box.

Further Reference:

Melbourne University’s EHS Manual – Phone Threat Checklist:  

Chemical, Biological and Radiological (CBR)  