



What To Do - Bomb Threat

Bomb threats or suspicious items are rare, but should always be taken seriously. How quickly and safely you react to a bomb threat could save lives, including your own.

What should you do?

The guidance and resources listed below outline in-depth procedures for either bomb threats or suspicious items and will help you prepare and react appropriately during these events.

If You Receive a Bomb Threat

Bomb threats are most commonly received via phone, but are also made in person, via email, written note, or other means. Every bomb threat is unique and should be handled in the context of the facility or environment in which it occurs. Facility supervisors and law enforcement will be in the best position to determine the credibility of the threat. Follow these procedures:

- Remain calm.
- Notify authorities immediately:
 - Notify your facility supervisor, such as a manager, operator, or administrator, or follow your facility's standard operating procedure. (See below for assistance with developing a plan for your facility or location.)
 - Call 9-1-1 or your local law enforcement if no facility supervisor is available.
- Refer to the [DHS Bomb Threat Checklist](#) for guidance, if available.
- For threats made via phone:
 - Keep the caller on the line as long as possible. Be polite and show interest to keep them talking.
 - **DO NOT HANG UP**, even if the caller does.
 - If possible, signal or pass a note to other staff to listen and help notify authorities.
 - Write down as much information as possible—caller ID number, exact wording of threat, type of voice or behavior, etc.—that will aid investigators.
 - Record the call, if possible.



- For threats made in person, via email, or via written note, refer to the [DHS Bomb Threat Checklist](#) and [DHS-DOJ Bomb Threat Guidance](#) for more information.
- Be available for interviews with facility supervisors and/or law enforcement.
- Follow authorities' instructions. Facility supervisors and/or law enforcement will assess the situation and provide guidance regarding facility lock-down, search, and/or evacuation.

Watch the Bomb Threat Training Video below and refer to the [DHS-DOJ Bomb Threat Guidance](#) for more information.

If You Find a Suspicious Item

Together we can help keep our communities safe—if you see something that is suspicious, out of place, or doesn't look right, say something. (Find out more about the "[If You See Something, Say Something™](#)" campaign.) A **suspicious item** is any item (e.g., bag, package, vehicle, etc.) that is reasonably believed to contain explosives, an improvised explosive device (IED), or other hazardous material that requires a bomb technician and/or specialized equipment to further evaluate it. Examples that could indicate a bomb include unexplainable wires or electronics, other visible bomb-like components, and unusual sounds, vapors, mists, or odors. Generally speaking, anything that is **Hidden**, **Obviously suspicious**, and not **Typical (HOT)** should be deemed suspicious. In addition, potential indicators for a bomb are threats, placement, and proximity of the item to people and valuable assets.

NOTE: Not all items are suspicious. An **unattended item** is an item (e.g., bag, package, vehicle, etc.) of unknown origin and content where there are no obvious signs of being suspicious (see above). Facility search, lock-down, or evacuation is not necessary unless the item is determined to be suspicious.

You may encounter a suspicious item unexpectedly or while conducting a search as part of your facility's or employer's Bomb Threat Response Plan. If it appears to be a suspicious item, follow these procedures:

- Remain calm.
- Do **NOT** touch, tamper with, or move the package, bag, or item.
- Notify authorities immediately:
 - Notify your facility supervisor, such as a manager, operator, or administrator, or follow your facility's standard operating procedure. (See below for assistance with developing a plan for your facility or location.)
 - Call 9-1-1 or your local law enforcement if no facility supervisor is available.



- Explain why it appears suspicious.
- Follow instructions. Facility supervisors and/or law enforcement will assess the situation and provide guidance regarding shelter-in-place or evacuation.
- If no guidance is provided and you feel you are in immediate danger, calmly evacuate the area. Distance and protective cover are the best ways to reduce injury from a bomb.
- Be aware. There could be other threats or suspicious items.

Every situation is unique and should be handled in the context of the facility or environment in which it occurs. Facility supervisors and law enforcement will be in the best position to determine if a real risk is posed and how to respond. Refer to the [DHS-DOJ Bomb Threat Guidance](#) for more information.

Have a Plan - Guidance for Facility Owners, Operators, and Managers

Having a plan in advance makes the response to bomb threats, unattended items, or suspicious items as orderly and controlled as possible, reducing risk and the impact of false alarms on regular activities. Facility supervisors—such as school, office, or building managers responsible for the facility—should:

- Review the [DHS-DOJ Bomb Threat Guidance](#).
- Develop a Bomb Threat Response Plan for their organization or facility. Contact the Office for Bombing Prevention at OBP@hq.dhs.gov for more information on planning workshops.
- Train employees, tenants, and/or visitors to take appropriate actions in the event of a bomb threat and/or identification of an unattended or suspicious item.

Developed in partnership with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the [Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\)-Department of Justice \(DOJ\) Bomb Threat Guidance](#) is a quick reference guide that provides facility supervisors with details on pre-threat preparation, threat assessment, staff response guidelines, and evacuation and shelter-in-place considerations. Download the DHS-DOJ Bomb Threat Guidance for more information.

School-specific bomb threat guidance can also be found at ThreatPlan.org and the [Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools \(REMS\) Technical Assistant Center](#).

Bomb Threat Checklist

Whether the bomb threat is made via phone, handwritten note, email, or other means, the [DHS Bomb Threat Checklist](#) provides instructions on how to respond

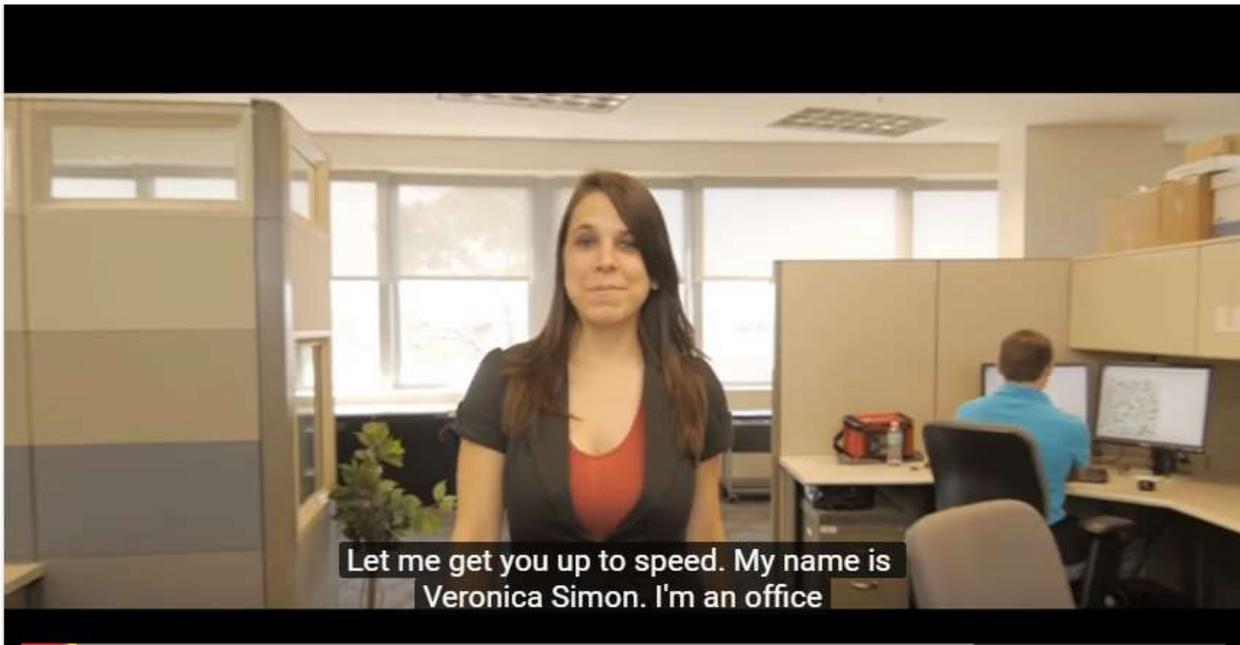


to a bomb threat and a comprehensive list of information that will assist law enforcement in a bomb threat investigation.

- [Print this checklist](#) for your business, organization, or facility to use in case of a bomb threat.
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Bomb Threat Training Video

It's important to know what steps every day citizens can and should take in the event of a bomb threat. This video, developed by the [University of Central Florida](#), in conjunction with the [International Association of Chiefs of Police \(IACP\)](#) and the [Office for Bombing Prevention](#) within the [National Protection and Programs Directorate's Office of Infrastructure Protection](#), teaches viewers how to respond in the event they receive a bomb threat.



Download and print the [Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\) Bomb Threat Checklist](#) used in this video.

Additional Resources for State and Local Law Enforcement, First Responders, and Private Sector Security

If you have an official role in planning for or responding to bomb threats, these specialized programs, products, and information may be useful to you.



Bomb Prevention Planning

The Department offers planning resources and workshops to help jurisdictions understand the IED risk and how to incorporate effective counter-IED risk mitigation practices into preparedness planning. Our [guides and programs](#) assist with collectively identifying roles, responsibilities, capability gaps, and how to optimize limited resources within a planning area.

Bomb Prevention Training

DHS provides a variety of [counter-improvised explosive device \(IED\) trainings](#) and develops [counter-IED products](#) for law enforcement, first responders, and the private sector to enhance the security and resilience of the Nation.

OBP also maintains catalogs of counter-IED preparedness training and education resources that are provided directly by the federal government or are federally sponsored. These catalogs are available for both private sector and State, local, tribal, and territorial partners:

- [The Catalog of Federally Sponsored Counter-IED Training and Education Resources for Private Sector Partners](#)
- [The Catalog of Federally Sponsored Counter-IED Training and Education Resources for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial \(SLTT\) Partners](#)

TRIP*wire*

The [Technical Resource for Incident Prevention \(TRIP*wire*\)](#) is the Department of Homeland Security's 24/7 online, collaborative information-sharing and resource portal for evolving IED tactics, techniques, and procedures, as well as lessons learned, for:

- Bomb squads
- First responders
- Military personnel
- Government officials
- Intelligence analysts
- Private sector security professionals

Contact Information

To report suspicious activity, call 9-1-1 or contact local law enforcement.

Please contact your local [Protective Security Advisor \(PSA\)](#) or send an e-mail to the Office for Bombing Prevention (OBP) at OBP@hq.dhs.gov for additional information about OBP products and programs, or to schedule a training session or a planning workshop.



Informed, alert communities play a critical role in keeping our nation safe.
Everyone has a responsibility to protect our nation—"[If You See Something, Say Something™](#)."

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