

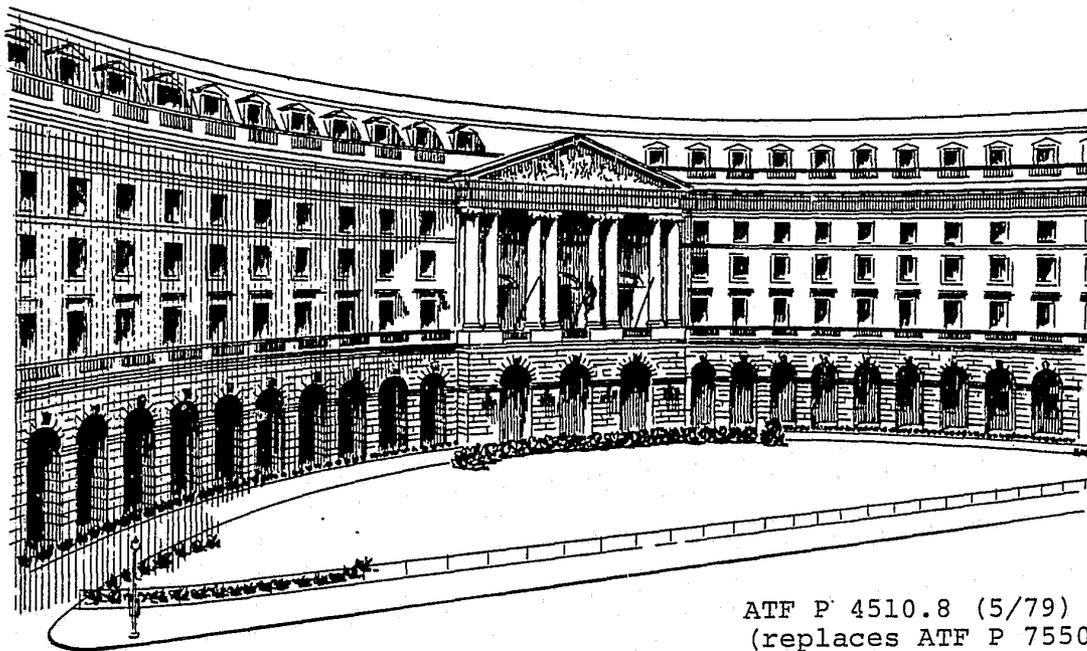


DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY  
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms

3  
Instructor  
Text

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2  
**Modular Explosives  
Training Program**

Development of Bomb Incident  
Policy and Procedure



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# DEVELOPMENT OF BOMB INCIDENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

01

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# DEVELOPMENT OF BOMB INCIDENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Like all major public safety responsibilities, the bomb incident can be effectively handled only through prior planning and policy formulation. All agencies, regardless of size or location, should anticipate bomb and bomb threat incidents and develop procedures that will most effectively employ available personnel and material resources.

While it is true that a single concept of operations applicable to all public safety agencies would not be practical, it is equally true that there are certain basic considerations that apply to all bomb incident planning. The purpose of this publication is to provide public safety personnel with a framework for the analysis of bomb incidents, including background, policy considerations and personnel assignments based on the various levels of skill required. Subsequent publications in this series will contain detailed guidelines for the development of specific responsive procedures.

## BACKGROUND

Bomb threats and bombings are on the increase in the United States. Recent testimony before the Senate Permanent Investigations Committee estimated that during the period 1 January 1969 and 15 April 1970 (15½ months) there were 4,330 explosive and incendiary bombings in the United States. These incidents accounted for 40 deaths, 384 injuries and property damage of over 22 million dollars. During the same period, 1,475 additional bombing attempts failed and over 35,000 bomb threats were received.

Whether this trend will continue, or peak and decline, is a matter for speculation. In any event, bombing is clearly perceived as a serious social problem by large segments of the public and the law enforcement community and, in this context, the need for official response is relatively independent of any anticipated course of events.

The bomb, regarded by many as the ultimate weapon of terrorism, has been employed sporadically in the United States over the past hundred or so years by groups and individuals in violent conflict with each other and with society at large. The mentally ill, racists, political exiles, anarchists, right and left wing militants, labor organizers, and syndicated criminals have all employed the bomb with varying degrees of success in support of their particular causes.

- In 1886, an anarchist's bomb killed seven policemen in Haymarket Square, Chicago.
- Ten people were killed in 1916 when a fragmentation bomb was thrown at a San Francisco parade.
- A suspicious package was brought into the Central Police Station in Milwaukee for examination in November of 1917. It exploded, killing eleven persons, including nine policemen.
- Two years later a total of thirty-six bombs were sent through the mail to prominent industrialists.
- The famous "Wall Street Bomb" of 1930 resulted in the death of thirty-three persons and injured an additional two hundred bystanders.
- Between 1941 and 1957 New York's "mad bomber" demonstrated the ease with which simple bombs could be employed to terrorize a modern city.
- The home of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and several Negro churches were bombed in 1956.
- Following a series of explosions in churches and synagogues, the 1960 Civil Rights Act made it a Federal crime to cross state lines to avoid prosecution for using explosives against a vehicle or building, but even the threat of stiff Federal penalties did not deter violence by explosives. As late as 1963 the South recorded over five hundred bombings including one incident which took the lives of five Negro Sunday school children.

While there has been no comprehensive historical record developed to reflect either the quantity or the quality of criminal bombing activity in the United States, it is clear that the current rash of "new left" and "right wing" bombings represent not a new and alien tactic, but simply the contemporary revival of a traditional form of violence.

The distinguishing features of the present situation, at least from the public safety point of view, are twofold. *First*, information in the hands of dissident groups makes possible the construction of sophisticated explosive devices that are extremely difficult to disarm. *Second*, the new wave of bomb and bomb threat activity is widely diversified geographically, significant in volume, and eminently credible. Earlier bomb epidemics were generally regional problems or confined to the very large urban centers where police technical and investigative expertise was available or could be rapidly mobilized. Such is not the case today.

### **The Bombers**

Excluding conjecture and reactionary rhetoric, there is very little national data available regarding the motives of the present day bombers. A current Treasury Department study concluded that only about one-third of all recent bombing incidents could be attributed to any specific cause or group. The breakdown for the known one-third was:

- |                                      |     |  |    |
|--------------------------------------|-----|--|----|
| • Campus disorder and student unrest | 56% | • Activities in aid of criminal pursuits | 8% |
| • Black Extremists                   | 19% | • Labor Disputes                         | 2% |
| • White Extremists                   | 14% | • Religious Difficulties                 | 1% |

Efforts are currently underway to provide more detailed analysis of the motives and affiliations of bombers. In the meantime, it is reasonable to assume that there are at least three characteristics of bombing that would appeal to those radical fringe groups now at odds with the established social order in the United States.

*Psychology* — without attempting any deep analysis of either the social or psychological aspects of radical behavior, it is still possible to identify several aspects of bombing as a form of violence that is potentially attractive to the radical mind.

- Bombing is historically and dramatically linked to anarchy, nihilism, and classical revolution.
- Bombing is essentially a symbol of extreme frustration. It represents a sense of abandonment of hope and total rejection of the possibility of change within the system. The alienated individual who feels most powerless in society can, in effect, retaliate by exerting ultimate power — the power of life and death.
- In the planning and construction phases, bombing can provide a satisfying feeling of conspiracy, danger, action, drama, and group excitement, all short of the final act of violence.
- When the device ignites or detonates in the target area, the participants need not be present and can effectively disassociate themselves psychologically from any resulting injury or death. Thus, bombing allows the squeamish to inflict great violence without being forced to personally witness its consequences. The troubled conscience can be further alleviated by a warning call to the victim or the press.

*Technology* — Contrary to popular opinion, neither commercial explosives nor blasting caps are necessary for the construction of effective bombs. Much underground literature and some legitimate publications provide information on bomb construction with materials that can be obtained in any hardware store or pharmacy in the United States. Instructions are even provided for ordering a lethal supply of chemicals from several sources to avoid arousing suspicion. However, even without such crude directions, the manufacture of bombs is well within the capability of the serious high school or average college chemistry student. Thus, bombing is a simple and inexpensive game that anyone can play.

*Security* — Finally, successful bombing destroys the kind of physical evidence that frequently leads to conviction in many crimes of violence. Fingerprints, characteristic marking on bullets, bloodstains, and even tool marks offer no threat to the careful bomber. Even eyewitnesses, the major source of incriminating evidence in crimes against the person, are frequently not available in bombing cases.

In summary, then, bombing offers a psychologically rewarding, simple, and relatively safe instrument of depersonalized violence, with great potential for terror and publicity.

However, whatever its future, political bombing accounts for only a portion of contemporary bombing activity. If preliminary trend data are accurate, the bomb is likely in the near future to become a far more common tool of extortion, criminal diversion, and homicide.

### **Public Safety Capability**

Only about a dozen of the largest municipal, county, and state public safety agencies have created units with the equipment and technical personnel necessary to handle bomb disposal assignments. Outside of larger metropolitan areas the only qualified disposal technicians available are the military Explosive Ordnance Disposal units. These units are located throughout the United States, but due to other commitments they are not always able to provide the rapid response required in bomb incidents. In addition, the current trend toward defense spending cutbacks has resulted in the deactivation and relocation of several of these units at a time when bombings are on the increase in many communities.

It can safely be stated that virtually every public safety agency in the nation is in need of some degree of assistance to quickly reach a desirable level of proficiency in dealing with incidents involving explosive or incendiary bombs. While the specific needs of agencies vary, assistance is most frequently requested in one or more of the following categories.

- *Policy and Procedure*

Guidelines for developing effective procedures for the handling of bomb incidents from the receipt of a threat through to the successful conclusion of the investigation.

- *Data*

Timely incident data indicating national and regional trends and technical data reflecting new bomb techniques and technology.

- *Training*

Training curricula and materials for all public safety personnel involved in bombing incidents, including intensive training courses for technical personnel.

- *Equipment*

Guidance and funds for procurement of specialized equipment for bomb disposal and the hardening of potential targets.

To help public safety agencies increase their ability to deal with bombing incidents, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration of the U. S. Department of Justice has asked the IACP to establish the National Bomb Data Center (NBDC). The Center will respond to the immediate need for policy and procedure guidelines, data, and training materials. It is anticipated that equipment requirements will be addressed through the established LEAA/state planning and funding relationship.

### **THE BOMB INCIDENT**

Line A of figure 1 illustrates a simplified bomb incident flow chart and points out six critical decision points.

- Will evacuation be ordered?
- Will the search be overt or covert?
- Will damage control measures be employed?
- Will the device be removed to a safe area or disarmed in place?
- Will final disposal be by detonation/ignition or disarming?
- Will evidence support the arrest of suspects?

Each of these decisions is operational in nature and can only be made by personnel familiar with the facts of each individual case. More basic, however, are certain policy decisions that must be reached and disseminated by the administrator of the public safety organization.

It has often been noted that, in the absence of guidelines from any other source, the public safety officer on the scene will of necessity develop his own policy. In the case of bombing incidents or any incident involving explosives or incendiaries, an erroneous decision by an inadequately prepared officer could have unfortunate consequences. An established policy, therefore, is essential to the safety of officers and other members of the community.

### **POLICY FORMULATION**

Policy development is decision making. It involves the selection of the best possible course of action to suit the situation at hand. Because bombing incidents often involve many variables which cannot be controlled, responsive policy must be broad enough to allow flexibility and yet restrictive

enough to provide guidance within specific parameters. Before operational procedures can be established, certain basic policy questions must be resolved.

- *What is the basic objective of public safety response to a bomb incident?*

Most public safety administrators, by virtue of their background and training, would respond that personnel safety is paramount. On the other hand, apprehension of the bomber and defeat of his intentions would certainly also be desirable. To an owner of a business, however, production or the protection of property might seem equally important. To further complicate the matter, a clearly defined choice between the preservation of life and the protection of property is frequently not available or is beyond the control of public safety personnel.

In any event, the public safety administrator should establish a policy for his agency after carefully considering the available alternatives and reviewing his legal authority to carry out such a policy position in relation to both public and private property.

- *What public safety agency will respond?*

A related, and perhaps more difficult, decision concerns the issue of division of responsibility between police and fire agencies. While police departments have traditionally assumed responsibility for explosive bomb incidents, the status of response to fire bombing is considerably less clear. In major cities and many smaller communities the fire service has assumed the responsibility for arson investigation and now frequently includes incendiary bombings within its jurisdiction.

Wherever investigative responsibility is assigned, police and fire personnel will be required to cooperate closely at the scene of a fire bombing or explosion and their respective responsibilities should be clearly defined in advance to preclude conflict, wasted effort, and the loss of physical evidence or investigative leads. Matters of jurisdiction and coordination must be decided and compatible policy established.

- *Will the public safety agency respond to all bombing threats?*

In many communities the incidence of bombing threats is so low that public safety officials can easily respond to every threat. In larger communities, however, this is not always possible and may not even be desirable. For example, in periods of intense activity a uniform response action might soon dissipate the capability of the agency. To avoid this situation, policy should specify when the department will respond and the level of response considered appropriate.

Categorization of incidents might also be considered to insure that available response capability is directed toward the most critical problem areas. This can be accomplished by assigning priorities to incidents as they occur or pre-classifying known or potential targets.

- *How will decisions be made at the scene?*

Who will make important decisions at the scene of the bomb incident? Will all decisions be made by the senior officer present? What about technical decisions? Who will be authorized to order evacuations? Who will control or coordinate technical and investigative personnel at the scene?

Technical and operational decision making authority should be commensurate with the skill level of the personnel involved. For example, it is generally agreed that the authority to decide how or if a bomb is to be rendered safe must rest solely with the bomb disposal technician present at the scene. The infinite variety of possible bomb fuzing systems and the detailed knowledge, training, and experience necessary to recognize and deal with such devices, make it essential that policy statements reflect this and other important decision making authority.

- *What reporting procedures should be established?*

Who should be notified of bomb threats? Of bomb explosions or fires? How should such incidents be reported internally? How should sensitive technical and investigative data be protected from public disclosure by the news media?

The reporting policy should also require a complete after-action report to include a description of the bomb and components, precise location, and all other evidence which might assist in identifying the bomber. In addition the agency should participate in the NBDC Technical Services program by forwarding detailed classified reports to the National Bomb Data Center where they can be analyzed and compared with other reports to determine national bomb incident trends and new bomb construction technology.

## Operations and Procedures

Basic policy, once established, normally requires the development of detailed implementing instructions. Due to the infinite number of variables involved in dealing with homemade bombs, detailed instructions in bomb disposal operations are not always practical. Generally, all phases of operations conducted prior to actual location of the suspected bomb are standard and structured. Beyond this point, actions taken will be controlled by the characteristics of the suspected bomb. Therefore, operating procedures should take into account the latitude required by the various skill levels of personnel involved in a bomb incident response. These skill requirements are discussed in the following section.

## SKILL REQUIREMENTS

Analysis of the typical bomb incident that runs the full course from warning through investigation suggests that three basic skill constellations are involved in an effective response pattern.

- *Protective.* Skills involved in responding to the need to protect life and property. Includes ability to deal with and control excited or frightened persons, make or influence decisions under stress, conduct search operations, and employ damage control measures. Relative personal risk: *minimal to moderate.*
- *Technical.* Skills involved in neutralizing incendiary and explosive devices through disarming or detonation. Includes ability to recognize and defeat a wide range of fuzing systems; work under stress; and safely dispose of all commonly encountered explosives. Relative personal risk: *high.*
- *Investigative.* Skills involved in working with physical and human evidence to identify persons responsible for bombing incidents. Includes knowledge of legal requirements and ability to make maximum use of investigative resources. Relative personal risk: *normal for investigative activities.*

## FUNCTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS

To identify three skill constellations required for response to bomb incidents is not necessarily to conclude that three individuals are required. In some agencies a single officer may be expected to process an entire incident, although such an assignment would require an extremely well-trained individual and should not be attempted unless the officer is fully qualified in all aspects of the assignment. In other agencies the technical and investigative or protective and technical roles may be combined. In any case, the need for 24 hour coverage is apparent and will require assignment of sufficient personnel to meet anticipated needs in terms of time of day and volume of work.

Because of the high level of skill and risk involved, the technical task becomes the key to the planning of functional assignments. Lines B, C and D of Figure 1 suggest four functional assignments and their relationship to each other and to the bomb incident. In the unlikely event that an adequate number of fully qualified technical personnel are immediately available, only public safety officers and investigators are required to service the bomb incident. If such is not the case, however, the agency should seriously consider the training of one or more bomb scene officers to reduce the workload of technical personnel and provide coverage beyond the capability of the public safety officer.

- *Public Safety Officer* (patrolman, fireman, guard)
  - Incident response
  - Recognition of explosive and incendiary devices
  - Basic evacuation procedures
  - Basic search procedures
  - Basic damage control measures
  - Reporting and recording
- *Bomb Scene Officer*
  - Incident response
  - Recognition of explosive and incendiary devices
  - Evacuation procedures

Search procedures  
Damage control measures  
Movement of devices to safe area under certain prescribed conditions in the absence of a bomb technician  
Reporting and recording

• *Bomb Disposal Technician*

Damage control measures  
Evaluation of devices  
Disarming  
Detonation/ignition  
Transportation  
Disposal of explosive materials  
Processing of evidence at scene (detonation/ignition)  
Reporting and recording

• *Investigator*

Processing of evidence at scene (no detonation/ignition)  
Follow-up of investigative leads  
Searches and arrests  
Case preparation  
Reporting and recording

Some insight into the various skill levels can be gained by comparing the estimated minimum bomb incident training period required for each assignment.

|                          |           |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Public Safety Officer    | 4 hours   |
| Bomb Scene Officer       | 24 hours  |
| Investigator             | 24 hours  |
| Bomb Disposal Technician | 120 hours |

Thus, all public safety officers should be trained in basic evacuation, damage control, and bomb identification techniques. Their responsibilities must be stated in such a manner as to leave no doubt as to the limitations of their skills and the hazards of exceeding these limits. The bomb scene officer, on the other hand, should not only be trained in the basic public safety officer skills but also in more advanced procedures. In the area of damage control, for example, the bomb scene officer may be expected to do more than open windows and doors. He may be given instruction in the construction of protective works and the use of shielding devices. His skill in identification might include the use of a stethoscope or portable X-ray. In some instances it may be desirable to train, equip, and authorize him to remotely remove a bomb from a facility. His responsibilities, while broader than the public safety officer's, must also indicate clearly his limitations based on his level training and skill. In no case should his title or stated responsibilities authorize or imply authority to attempt a disarming or other high risk procedure.

#### TRAINING RESOURCES

Every public safety agency should include at least one individual trained in basic bomb recognition, evacuation and damage control procedures. This basic training is available to all departments through the Department of the Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal Detachments which are located throughout the United States. A list of these units can be obtained from the (NBDC Information Bulletin 01) or any local military installation.

It is anticipated that a federally funded three-week bomb disposal technician training course will be available in January 1971. Currently, the NBDC is preparing a 4-hour instructional block for inclusion in the basic training of public safety officers and additional training curricula and materials for the in-service training of bomb scene officers and investigators.

**END**