

# ESP FOCUS

## Bomb Threats



Terrorists use violence or the threat of violence to advance their political, social or religious goals. In recent years, bombing has been a popular weapon for terrorists in other countries and here in the United States. Explosive devices can be simple and virtually home made, or technically complex.

Bombs can be large or small, and can easily be disguised. They can be thrown into an area, left behind and triggered remotely or when they are disturbed or they can be carried or driven into a target area by a suicide bomber.

Most of the bombings in this country are attributed to vandalism or mailbox bombings. Professional terrorists, on the other hand, look for targets that symbolize their causes and that will gain them maximum attention: government buildings, corporations, banks, airports, embassies, cultural landmarks, animal laboratories, abortion clinics, and tourist attractions.

The new Department of Homeland Security and traditional law enforcement and investigative agencies have taken extensive measures to reduce the chance that terrorists can implement explosive attacks against Americans. Public places, airports, critical infrastructure, and governmental facilities have implemented far greater security than before September 11, 2001.

## TAKE ACTION

Every American can help in the effort to make us safer from bombings by being alert to any suspicious activity, making sure homes and families are prepared with emergency supplies and plans, supporting emergency preparedness training for children and schools, and exercising caution when traveling.

## LEARN MORE

Knowledge is power. The more you know about bomb threats and what to do if you are exposed to one, the better you can protect yourself, your family, and your co-workers.

## CHECK THESE WEBSITES

[www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov) (Transportation Security Administration)

[www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov) (Department of Homeland Security)

[www.atf.gov](http://www.atf.gov) (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives)

[www.consumer.gov/postalinspectors/aboutus.htm](http://www.consumer.gov/postalinspectors/aboutus.htm) (United States Postal Inspection Service)



# A P R I L

[www.espfocus.org](http://www.espfocus.org)

## WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

### PREPARE AT WORK

- Review your company's procedure for dealing with bomb threats. If one does not exist, work with the appropriate personnel to establish a policy or procedure.
- Canvass work areas to become familiar with objects that are familiar.
- Establish a signal that receptionists and others who answer phones can use to indicate that they are receiving a threat.
- Develop a bomb threat checklist.
- Identify and practice using evacuation routes.

### IF YOU RECEIVE A BOMB THREAT

- Remain calm and courteous. Do not interrupt the caller, and keep the caller on the line as long as possible.
- Signal a co-worker that you have received a bomb threat, and have him or her notify your security officer and local law enforcement immediately.
- Advise the caller that there are people in the building and innocent persons could be killed or injured.
- Ask the caller to repeat the message, with as much detail as possible.
- Immediately after the call, write down every detail that you remember, and give a copy of your notes to your security officer or supervisor.
- Ask employees to examine their immediate work areas as well as common areas such as lunchrooms, mail rooms and bathrooms. What is here that doesn't belong?

### IF YOU LOCATE A SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE

Whether at work or in a public place, you should regard unattended or unusual packages or luggage with suspicion.

- Look for possible owners.
- Get a detailed description of the article (size, color, markings, odors, sounds).
- Note the exact location and approximately when the item was first noticed.
- Using a conventional, wired telephone, contact a supervisor, security officer, or the police.
- Do not use a cordless phone, cellular telephone, walkie-talkie or radio.
- Do not touch or move the object. Do not turn lights or thermostats on or off. Treat the object as potential evidence.
- Prepare for possible evacuation.

### HOW TO IDENTIFY A POSSIBLE MAIL BOMB

If you are suspicious of a mailing and you can't verify the contents with the sender or the addressee:

- Don't open it.
- Treat it as suspicious.
- Isolate it.
- Using a conventional, wired phone, call **9-1-1**.

Here's what to look for:

- The package or mail piece:
  - Bulges or soft spots

- Unbalanced weight
  - Oily stains on wrapping
  - Protruding wire or aluminum foil
  - Strange odor
  - Sounds
  - Wrapped with string or retaped
  - Too much postage
- The markings:
    - Restrictive markings: "Personal," "To be opened by addressee only"
    - Misspelled words
    - Badly typed or written; cut-and-paste letters
    - Return address is fictitious, unfamiliar, or missing entirely
    - Addressed to someone's title only, or mismatched name and title
    - Postmark city different from return address

### IF THERE IS AN EXPLOSION

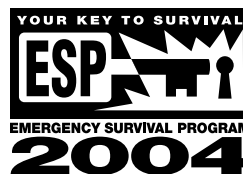
- Take shelter under a desk or a sturdy table.
- Exit the building as quickly as possible.
- Do not use elevators.
- Check for fire and other hazards.
- Take your emergency kit if time allows.

### IF THERE IS A FIRE

- Crawl below the smoke level and exit the building immediately.
- Use a wet cloth to cover your mouth and nose, if possible.
- Feel the top of a closed door with the back of one hand. If the door is hot, look for another exit.
- If you catch on fire, do not run. **STOP, DROP, and ROLL** to smother the flames.
- Never re-enter a burning building. Gather at a pre-designated meeting point.
- Call the fire department.

### IF YOU ARE TRAPPED IN DEBRIS

- If possible, use a flashlight to signal your location.
- Avoid unnecessary movement so that you don't kick up dust, dislodge debris, cause yourself further injury or exhaust yourself.
- Cover your mouth and nose with anything you have on hand. Try to breathe through the material.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so that rescuers can hear where you are.
- Use a whistle if one is available. Shout only as a last resort when you hear the sounds of rescuers, because shouting can cause a person to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.



This focus sheet is produced as part of the Emergency Survival Program (ESP). ESP is an awareness campaign designed to increase home, neighborhood, business and school emergency preparedness. ESP was developed by the County of Los Angeles. The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and representatives from Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Mono, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, and Ventura counties, Southern California Edison, the Southern California Earthquake Center and the American Red Cross assist in the development of campaign materials and coordination of the campaign.