



### Bomb Squad Field Responses

The Orange County Sheriff's Department Bomb Squad, also known as the Hazardous Devices Section (HDS), is the only Bomb Squad serving the 34 cities and 3.2 million residents located within Orange County. Bomb Technicians are available 24/7 - weekends and holidays, to respond anywhere within Orange County at the request of public safety agencies. The Bomb Squad is trained to handle a broad spectrum of unusual occurrences, ranging from simple fireworks possession and juvenile destructive devices, to found military ordnance, complex post-blast scenes involving fatalities and the stabilization of improvised nuclear devices. In addition to these responsibilities, the Bomb Squad also provides Explosive Detection K9 services, underwater post blast / hazardous device management and explosive breaching and tactical support capabilities for SWAT teams within Orange County. It is nearly impossible to concisely cover the diverse variety of Bomb Squad missions, but the most frequent calls for service can be summarized under several commonly encountered categories. This training bulletin has been produced to assist OCSD personnel with the completion of initial threat assessments and determination of when a Bomb Squad response should be requested.

#### SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES AND DEVICES

Calls for service involving suspicious packages and devices are a regular occurrence in the Orange County operational area, and one of the Bomb Squad's most common calls for service. When responding to a suspicious item or package, the first determination that must be made by public safety personnel is whether the item is simply "unattended" or if it is truly "suspicious" in nature. Determining if an item is suspicious is a subjective decision and one which is usually made by the reporting party or the first responder arriving on scene, and as such, a thorough and accurate threat assessment by the first responder is paramount to the decision-making process. Common sense, experience, training, instinct, and familiarity with your surroundings are all factors which assist with determining if an item is considered suspicious.

#### Suspicious items may present some of the following indicators to observers:

- The item appears to be an improvised explosive device (IED) or looks like a hoax IED.
- The item is located at a critical evacuation location or along an evacuation route.
- The item is out of place and does not belong in the surroundings where it was located. There is an indication from an explosive detection K9 or explosive detection equipment that explosives are present.
- There are suspicious odors emanating from the item. Packaging indicates stains that originate from within the item.
- The position of the item is suspicious and indicates an attempt to aim an IED.





- The item is adjacent to something which is unable to withstand an explosion.
- There is an attempt to conceal the item from detection. There are mechanical or electronic sounds coming from the item.
- The construction of the item suggests it may be a threat.
- The item is physically attached to an object and unable to be moved. There are multiple similar items located in the same area.
- A commonly recognizable item has been obviously modified.
- The item has components which could be used in the construction of an IED.
- Line, string, or wiring is connected to the item or attaching the item to another object. Consider the following commonly recognized indications of suspicious postal packages:
  - Unknown powder, oily stains, discolorations, or crystallization on wrapper.
  - Strange odor, suspicious substance or unknown powder coming from contents.
  - Excessive postage or postmark indicating it was mailed from a foreign country.
  - Rigid, bulky, lopsided, or uneven contents.
  - Excessive tape, string, or other packaging; protruding wires.
  - Poorly typed or written address, no return address, or incorrectly addressed.

The following guidelines were created to assist public safety personnel but should not be interpreted in a way that compromises the safety of first responders or the general public. When confronted with an incident involving the possible presence of explosives, **SAFETY MUST ALWAYS BE THE FIRST PRIORITY.**

- **SAFETY** of the first responders and the general public should always be the primary objective when dealing with suspicious items. No explosives or suspected devices should ever be considered safe regardless of their size or packaging.
- **CONDUCT A DETAILED THREAT ASSESSMENT** and relay information about the item as soon as possible to the incident commander without approaching, touching, or moving the item and while maintaining a safe distance. As much detailed information as practical should be provided to the responding Bomb Technicians as part of the initial request for assistance. Consider the following questions while conducting your threat assessment:
  - Is the device placed near or at a critical infrastructure or key resource location?
  - Is the location or facility a high-profile target?
  - Has there been a trend or increase in threat level associated with the location or similar locations?
  - Has the location experienced any recent suspicious activity or seemingly unrelated threats?
  - Was any suspicious activity observed in the vicinity of the suspicious item?
  - Have any specific threats been made regarding the package or device?
  - Is there any significant call history at the location?
  - Is there any reason the reporting party believes the item is an explosive device?
  - Who has seen the item?
  - Where is the item located?
  - Can the reporting party describe the size, shape, color, and appearance of the item?
  - Has anyone moved the item?
  - How long has the item been at the location?
  - Are there any secondary hazards at the location (gas, explosives, industrial chemicals, etc.)?

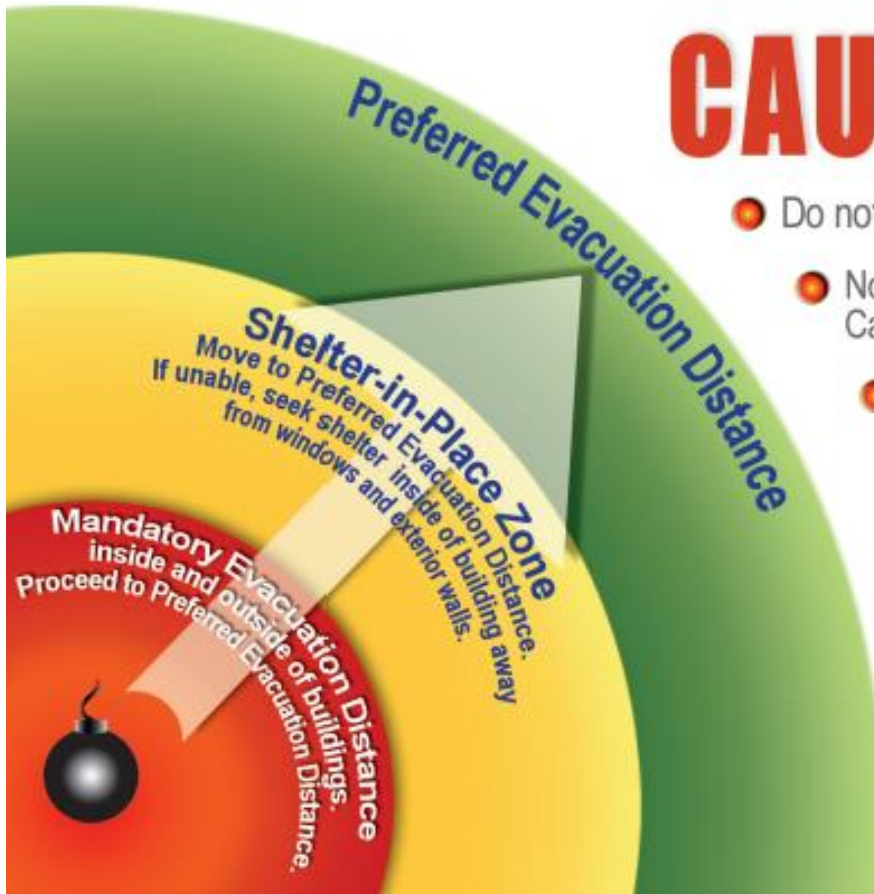




- Are there any easily recognizable signs which indicate the package contains hazardous materials or an improvised explosive device (IED)?
- **REQUEST APPROPRIATE RESOURCES** including the OCSB Bomb Squad, field supervisor, additional patrol units to secure and maintain a perimeter, fire department, etc. Contact the Orange County Sheriff's Department Bomb Squad directly at [REDACTED] or the OCSB Department Commander at [REDACTED] for technical assistance, assistance with determining the threat, or to request a Bomb Squad response (24/7). OCSB Patrol Operations Manual Section 21 mandates that requests for Bomb Squad field responses will be channeled through the Department Commander.
- **DO NOT TRANSMIT** on any equipment that produces radio frequencies within 50 feet of the item – this includes cellular phones – unless failure to transmit compromises life safety.
- **EVACUATE** the area as appropriate and establish **AT LEAST** a **300-foot perimeter**, while remaining behind and under hard cover. If adequate cover is unavailable, expand the perimeter. Provide physical barriers along access points with cones, crime scene tape, vehicles, etc. Refer to the Bomb Threat Standoff card featured below for recommended evacuation distances beyond the minimum 300-foot perimeter.

Threat Description		Explosives Capacity	Mandatory Evacuation Distance	Shelter-in-Place Zone	Preferred Evacuation Distance
	Pipe Bomb	5 lbs	70 ft	71-1199 ft	+1200 ft
	Suicide Bomber	20 lbs	110 ft	111-1699 ft	+1700 ft
	Briefcase/Suitcase	50 lbs	150 ft	151-1849 ft	+1850 ft
	Car	500 lbs	320 ft	321-1899 ft	+1900 ft
	SUV/Van	1,000 lbs	400 ft	401-2399 ft	+2400 ft
	Small Delivery Truck	4,000 lbs	640 ft	641-3799 ft	+3800 ft
	Container/Water Truck	10,000 lbs	860 ft	861-5099 ft	+5100 ft
	Semi-Trailer	60,000 lbs	1570 ft	1571-9299 ft	+9300 ft





# CAUTION!

- Do not touch suspicious item
- Notify proper Authorities - Call 911
- Ensure all witnesses are available to brief 1st responders
- Recommended stand-off data should be used in conjunction with your emergency evacuation plan

Sources: Department of Homeland Security, Office for Bombing Prevention, Arlington, VA  
FBI, Bomb Data Center, Quantico, VA  
Technical Support Working Group, Arlington, VA

- **SEARCH** for secondary devices which are designed to kill responders. If additional suspicious packages or devices are located, treat them as live explosive devices and take appropriate measures to secure the area.
- **NEVER OPEN, MOVE, HANDLE OR TRANSPORT** a suspicious item. If it has been deemed suspicious, treat it like a bomb. Only specially trained Bomb Technicians are qualified to handle suspicious or explosive devices.
- **BE AWARE** of suspicious persons in the crowd who may be conducting counter-surveillance or waiting to initiate a remote controlled improvised explosive device. If necessary, expand the perimeter to keep observers out of sight and detain any subjects who are determined to be suspicious.
- **FOLLOW-UP** with appropriate investigative techniques. Brief responding personnel, interview witnesses, document the incident and arrest suspects if applicable.
  - Brief the investigators handling the scene if applicable (e.g. homicide, criminal investigations).
  - OCSO Bomb Technicians may assist with follow-up investigations; however, at suspicious package or device scenes, their primary duties are to render the items safe, collect evidence for analysis and prepare technical reports detailing the construction and function of the device. They are not the primary investigative entity for the incident and do not conduct general investigative duties.





## MILITARY ORDNANCE AND AMMUNITION

Military ordnance, which is frequently encountered in Orange County, has historically varied from inert practice hand grenades to items as large as 750lb high explosive battleship projectiles. Unexploded military ordnance is generally handled by U.S. military Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians; however, if ordnance is outside control of the U.S. Department of Defense and located beyond the boundaries of military installations, it becomes the responsibility of the local Bomb Squad to determine if the item has been modified or altered from its original condition, and if so, whether to request military EOD assistance. Within Orange County, the OCSD Bomb Squad will make the determination when, or if military EOD assets are necessary, as many calls involving military ordnance are handled directly by OCSD Bomb Technicians in the field. Military ordnance should be treated with at least the same degree of caution as other suspicious items or packages; no item should ever be assumed inert or safe to handle. Any first responders encountering what they believe to be military ordnance are cautioned against handling, moving, or otherwise disturbing the items. Do not attempt to assess military ordnance; instead contact the Bomb Squad and request a field response. It should be noted that the Bomb Squad does not collect bulk quantities of small arms ammunition, unless it is .50 caliber or greater OR contains incendiary / explosive compounds.



## FIREWORKS AND ILLEGAL EXPLOSIVES

Along with suspicious items calls, the Bomb Squad also frequently responds to incidents related to possession or use of fireworks and illegal explosives. While these terms are many times used synonymously, it is important to point out that there are distinct differences between legal and illegal fireworks and those items which are classified as illegal explosives. First responders should be aware of these differences when taking enforcement action. Fireworks in the State of California are required to have the State Fire Marshal Seal of Registration. The three most commonly encountered fireworks are: Dangerous, Safe and Sane, and Party Poppers/Snap Caps. Party Poppers and Snap Caps are **LEGAL** items to possess in Orange County. Examples of the Fire Marshal Registration Seals appear below.

- **Unregistered Fireworks**

If the fireworks do not display a State Fire Marshal Seal of registration as illustrated, they are illegal. Health & Safety Code 12671 states “It is unlawful for any person to sell, offer for sale, use, discharge, possess, store, or transport any type of fireworks within this state unless the State Fire Marshal has classified and registered such fireworks.”

- **Safe and Sane**

Fireworks labeled “Safe and Sane” are subject to city municipal codes and local laws. OCCO 3-3-35, Section 33101.2 states “The storage, use, sale, possession, and handling of fireworks 1.4g (commonly referred to as Safe & Sane) and fireworks 1.3G is prohibited.” Violation of this section is a misdemeanor offense. Safe & Sane fireworks may include items such as Piccolo Petes, Fountains, Strobes and Sparklers; but do not include



items which are designed to rise into the air or explode – these items would be referred to as DANGEROUS fireworks and are illegal to possess anywhere in the State of California without a pyrotechnic permit. Examples of Safe and Sane fireworks appear in the images below.



- **Dangerous Fireworks**

Fireworks classified as DANGEROUS are a FELONY to possess if the total weight exceeds 100 pounds. Health & Safety Code 12677 states “It is unlawful for any person to possess DANGEROUS fireworks without holding a valid permit.” Health & Safety Code 12680 covers placement, throwing, igniting, or discharging DANGEROUS fireworks at a person or crowd where injury can occur or creating chaos, fear, or panic. Dangerous fireworks include aerial shells, Roman Candles, Firecrackers and Bottle Rockets. Examples of DANGEROUS fireworks appear in the images below.



- **Bottle Bombs**

A category of illegal device which includes chemical reaction bombs (dry ice or acid/caustic bombs) and pyrotechnic bottle bombs, commonly referred to as Piccolo Pete Bottle Bombs. These items are classified as destructive devices (CPC 16460) and their possession or use is a felony (CPC 18710 / 18715). Their frequent use by juvenile suspects in destruction of property is not considered vandalism, but felony use of a destructive device. Bottle bombs are dangerous overpressure devices which many times contain hazardous chemicals and should only be rendered safe and collected by properly trained Bomb Technicians. Several examples of bottle bombs are featured in the following images.



- **Illegal Explosives**

Include items commonly (and mistakenly) referred to as cherry bombs, M80's, M1000's, etc. These explosives are NOT FIREWORKS, but are non-commercial products constructed without quality controls or safety restrictions. They are a felony to possess (H&S 12305) in any amount and are classified as explosives by the CA State Fire Marshal (H&S 12000). These items are extremely dangerous and capable of causing serious bodily injury or property damage. Fire Stations WILL NOT collect illegal explosives and they cannot be booked as normal evidence, so the OCSD Bomb Squad must always be requested for collection, evidence storage and/or disposal of these items.



## Evidence Collection / Disposal

If fireworks or illegal explosives are considered evidence, contact the OCSD Bomb Squad for collection, processing and booking of the items. The fireworks or illegal explosives can be in any form (new or used.) OCSD Bomb Technicians will respond to the scene to collect and book the items into the HDS Evidence Magazine and will write the appropriate follow-up technical report for courtroom purposes. If the items are NOT EVIDENCE, but require destruction, the Bomb Squad will still respond to the location and take possession of the items for destruction. For the purposes of property/evidence storage, fireworks are the same as other explosive items in that they may NOT under any circumstances be booked into normal evidence due to the hazards associated with their handling, storage, and disposal.

## Post Blast Investigations

If fireworks or explosive items are used in a manner likely to result in property damage or injury, regardless of if actual damage or injury occurs, the HDS Sergeant should be consulted and may dispatch OCSD Bomb Technicians to the location to conduct a post blast investigation of the scene and collect necessary evidence related to their investigation.

## HAZARDOUS DEVICES SECTION / BOMB SQUAD

ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT BUREAU

1900 West Katella Avenue, Orange, CA 92867 – 24 HRS [REDACTED]

