


<p><b>RABUN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE</b></p>  <p><b>General Order Number: 4.10</b></p>	<p><b>Date of Issue</b></p> <p><b>2/23/2016</b></p>	<p><b>Effective Date</b></p> <p><b>2/23/2016</b></p>	<p><b>Revision Date</b></p>
<p>Subject: <b>BOMB THREATS &amp; SEARCHES</b></p>	<p>Amends:</p>	<p>Rescinds:</p>	
<p>Index as: Bomb Threats &amp; Searches General Policies and Procedures</p>	<p>State Certification Standards: 5.16</p>		

Special Instructions:

**PURPOSE**

The Purpose of this General Order is to prescribe the policies and procedures of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office in regards to responding to bomb threats and/or searches.

**STATEMENT OF POLICY**

It shall be the policy of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office that all responses to bomb threats and/or searches will be conducted systematically, efficiently and in a manner that gives primary consideration to the protection of life.

**DISCUSSION**

While most bomb threats are later determined to be hoaxes, all bomb threats and/or searches present a very serious challenge to this department in that there is an extreme possibility for serious injury or death. Therefore, all personnel involved in responding to a bomb threat or search must be mindful of the dangers involved and take all appropriate safety measures. All reports of bomb threats will be handled as a potentially life threatening situation, requiring an emergency response on a priority basis. This General Order is to be reviewed annually by the Office of Chief Deputy.

## DEFINITIONS

GBI – Georgia Bureau of Investigations

EOD — Emergency Ordinance and Disposal

### I. FIRST REQUIRED ACTIONS

- A. When a bomb threat is received by the Rabun County Central Communications Center or by departmental personnel, they will complete a Bomb Threat Checklist and attempt to obtain the following information:
  - 1. The exact location of the threat;
  - 2. Whether a device has been located;
  - 3. The time the device is set to explode;
  - 4. The name and location of the person reporting the threat; and
  - 5. The telephone number of the person reporting the threat.
- B. Rabun County Central Communications will do the following:
  - 1. Dispatch a minimum of two marked/unmarked units;
  - 2. Broadcast all available information to responding personnel;
  - 3. Prepare to assign one channel to the response personnel and advise all units to "10-3" (stop transmitting) AND "10-33" (emergency);
  - 4. Notify Fire, EMS, and EOD personnel (if requested- GBI EOD: 404-244-2600) and request they "stand-by" for further instructions; and
  - 5. Advise emergency response units to terminate radio transmissions within 1/4 mile of incident location.

### II. INITIAL RESPONDING UNIT(S) PROCEDURES

- A. Use code 1 or code 2 responses as appropriate.
- B. Terminate radio transmissions & turn-off portable/vehicle radios, emergency equipment, pagers, and mobile phones when approaching the incident location:
  - 1. Contact between response personnel will be "face-to-face" or
  - 2. By couriers, hand and arm signals, or by using whistles.

- C. Establish outer-perimeter by parking patrol vehicles no closer than 1000 feet (when possible) to the incident scene. This may be done after the initial responding officer has made contact with the owner/person in authority of the building;
- D. Contact the owner/person in authority of the building to gain additional information about the incident or to advise them of the nature of the threat; and
- E. Establish assembly point for additional response units at a location that is readily observable by other responding units, and which will serve as the area where appropriate instructions can be given to public safety personnel upon their arrival.
- F. In the event that the bomb threat is at a school, responding units will coordinate all activities with the school officials in accordance with their policies and procedures.

### **III. FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS OF RESPONDING UNITS**

- A. Upon their arrival at the incident scene, back-up personnel shall report to the initial assembly area or where previously directed by the Officer in Charge.
- B. It is of paramount importance that all available information about the bomb threat is provided to responding personnel before further actions are taken.
- C. Once response personnel have been briefed about the situation, individual assignments can be made as appropriate.
- D. Of first importance is the need to establish an inner perimeter approximately 300 to 500 feet from the target area so that access to the facility is strictly limited to only emergency response personnel.
- E. Once additional back-up personnel arrive on the scene, an outer-perimeter shall be established approximately 1000 feet from the target facility in order to block vehicular and pedestrian traffic from entering the affected area and to direct the entry of other public safety personnel.
- F. Deputies will not leave their designated area of responsibility unless directed by supervisory personnel.
- G. Each deputy, regardless of assignment, shall maintain a list of any witnesses to the incident and will keep supervisory personnel updated with information that is deemed pertinent to the threat.

### **IV. EVACUATION AUTHORIZATION**

- A. Unless a suspected explosive device is found, law enforcement personnel cannot order an evacuation. The owner or person in authority must direct the facility be evacuated.
- B. Deputies will only direct an evacuation if a suspicious device or actual bomb is located.
- C. In the event the bomb threat is at a school, the school officials will authorize an evacuation in accordance to their policies and procedures.

- D. In the event the bomb threat is at a public building such as the Rabun County Courthouse Complex, an evacuation of the entire Courthouse Complex will only be ordered by the Sheriff, Chief Deputy, Chief Judge and Court Services Division Sergeant.

## **V. EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

- A. An evacuation should be conducted in an orderly and expeditious manner.
- B. Persons to be evacuated should be advised of the situation and instructed to remain calm and to evacuate the facility immediately, without running or making any unnecessary noise.
- C. Deputies should be alert for any disabled, extremely young, or elderly personnel who may require special assistance from others being evacuated.
- D. All light switches, computers, telephones, facsimile machines, and other electrical devices should remain untouched.
- E. Doors and windows should not be opened and/or closed, except if required for the evacuation process.
- F. No items should be removed from the building except for readily available personal property, such as pocket books, briefcases, and outer-clothing.
- G. Evacuees should be directed to leave the affected building through the nearest exit and to proceed past the outer-perimeter for safety and accountability.

## **VI. BOMB SEARCH PROCEDURES**

- A. The Rabun County Sheriff's Office offers this county and surrounding areas, at request a certified EOD bomb dog and handler. In the event of a bomb threat, the EOD unit (GBI EOD: 404-244-2600) is to be contacted. The EOD unit will respond to and provide all information for contacts should an actual device be located and confirmed.
- B. If a bomb dog is not available, the best individuals to search are employees familiar with the area. They are more aware of items that are out of place or alien to the facility.
- C. Search teams should be formed, consisting of one deputy and one employee. Each team shall be assigned a specific location to search.
- D. Actions by search personnel should be well planned by the Officer in charge. There should be no undue movement, bumping, or shaking of items and furniture.
- E. Always start searching outside the building facility and then start at the lowest level of the interior of the building (basement) and work up to the highest floor.
- F. Never touch light switches or electronic control panels.
- G. If the building is not evacuated, the owner/official in-charge will be asked permission to conduct a discrete search of the inside and outside of the premises, especially in those areas accessible to the public, such as rest-rooms, waiting and reception areas.

- H. If the building is evacuated, the search shall not begin until all evacuees have left the area.
- I. The search of a building should be divided into several areas:
  - 1. The exterior search begins at the ground level. Close attention should be given to piles of leaves and refuse, shrubbery, trashcans, and parked vehicles adjacent to the facility (see vehicle search procedures below);
  - 2. The public area surrounds the facility and extends outward 25 to 50 feet from the building to some natural obstacle such as a wall or curb; and
  - 3. Special attention should be given first to unlimited access areas, rest rooms and utility areas.
- J. Whenever entering an area, remain calm and quiet. Listen closely for any unusual sounds. Search from the lowest point and work upwards in four levels:
  - 1. **Level One** - floor to waist: Check chairs, desks, trash cans, cabinets, and any other place where a bomb might be concealed;
  - 2. **Level Two** - waist to eye level: Check behind pictures, tall cabinets, and within closets;
  - 3. **Level Three** - eye level to the ceiling: Check any item suspended from the ceiling, such as light fixtures and heating/air conditioning ducts; and
  - 4. **Level Four** - ceilings and false ceilings.
- K. Vehicle Searches
  - 1. Bombs in vehicles are normally meant to kill rather than to harass. While devices in buildings are designed to explode at specific times, those in vehicles are usually set to explode with a triggering device.
  - 2. The Rabun County Sheriff's Office offers this county and surrounding areas, at request a certified EOD bomb dog and handler. In the event of a bomb threat, the EOD Unit is to be contacted. The EOD Unit will respond to and provide all information for contacts should an actual device be located and confirmed.
  - 3. The EOD unit will conduct vehicle searches. However should the EOD Unit already be deployed or assigned to another situation, then the patrol unit will make contact with the EOD Unit for instructions,,, as follows,,
  - 4. The first step is to locate the vehicle's owner. A registration check should be performed by notifying the Rabun County Central Communications Center by a phone from a neutral area or by radio outside the 1/4-mile radius of the targeted building.
  - 5. Ascertain when the vehicle was last operated, whether it was left locked or unlocked, who the passengers were, who the next driver was intended to be, and if previous threats had been made.

6. Check the exterior of the vehicle for any signs of tampering and the immediate area for unusual marks on the ground and for bits of tape or wire.
7. Isolate the area if there are any indications of an explosive device.
8. Safety of departmental personnel and others in the area is of utmost importance.

#### VII. COMMUNICATIONS DURING SEARCHES

- A. Strict radio and mobile telephone silence will be maintained at all times.
- B. Communications between search teams and with other response personnel shall be performed by runner or by using portable public address equipment.

#### VIII. DELAY SEARCH IF TOO CLOSE TO DETONATION TIME

- A. All search activities will be suspended no later than 15 minutes prior to the time the device is scheduled to detonate, when such activation information is available.
- B. All search personnel will be evacuated to a safe location outside the inner-perimeter and will remain there for at least one hour past the time the device was to be detonated, before resuming the search.

#### IX. CONCLUSION OF SEARCH

If no explosive or suspicious device is located, the owner/responsible official will be informed of the results of the search and told that it is now his/her responsibility to authorize the re-entry of evacuated personnel.

#### X. ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN UPON LOCATING A SUSPECTED BOMB

- A. If a suspected bomb is located, do not touch or move it.
- B. All search activities will stop & all personnel will evacuate the area to a safe location outside the inner-perimeter.
- C. The individual who locates a suspected explosive device shall obtain as much information about the item as possible, to include:
  1. Its exact location; and
  2. A complete physical description, to include size, color, the presence of wires or batteries, and any other distinguishing characteristics.
- D. All search team members should remember that there could be secondary device. This secondary device could be near the first device or could be placed in another location in an attempt to injure responding emergency personnel.

**XI. EOD ARRIVAL**

Bomb disposal personnel shall assume responsibility of the incident scene upon arrival and until such time as the device is neutralized or removed from the area.

**XII. EXPLOSION / DETONATION**

- A. Should an explosion occur the first priority of action is to provide emergency first aid to those in need.
- B. Once medical assistance is provided, the entire area of the explosion needs to be secured for crime scene processing and necessary follow-up investigations by appropriate investigations personnel.
- C. If not already at the incident scene, Fire, Medical, EOD, and the local office of the GBI are to be notified.

**XIII. FOLLOW-UP CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS**

- A. Once EOD personnel indicate that the area is safe, investigations personnel shall assume responsibility for the area and initiate a criminal investigation.
- B. Appropriate crime scene processing and evidence gathering procedures will be initiated.

**XIV. NEWS MEDIA SUPPORT AND ACCESS**

- A. The release of information and support provided to news media personnel will be in accordance with the provisions and the procedures prescribed in the Release of Information to the News Media General Order.
- B. Should news media personnel respond to the scene of a bomb threat, they will not be permitted to enter within the area identified by the inner-perimeter.
- C. The Officer in charge at the incident scene is responsible for providing reasonable assistance to media personnel until the arrival of the Sheriff, departmental PIO, or other members of the Command Staff. Officers will:
  - 1. Insure media representatives are treated with courtesy;
  - 2. Advise them of the estimated time of arrival of the PIO, Sheriff, and/or members of the Command Staff; and
  - 3. Insure that media personnel remain outside the inner perimeter and are kept away from potentially dangerous situations associated with the incident.

## XV. SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The Watch Commander will respond to all bomb threat calls and assume command of the scene until properly relieved by higher authority.
- B. Should the Watch Commander be out of service or otherwise unable to assume command of the incident scene, another supervisor on duty closest to the situation will take charge of the incident.
- C. Any in-service Division Commander or higher-ranking departmental member has the authority to assume control of a bomb threat incident.
- D. Specific responsibilities include:
  - 1. Coordinate and direct all bomb threat response activities;
  - 2. Designate which unit(s) is to provide on-scene assistance;
  - 3. Identify and initiate assembly location(s) and advise Rabun County Central Communications Center so that further instructions can be relayed once additional response personnel arrive;
  - 4. Insure all radio transmissions are terminated when response personnel are within 1/4 mile of the incident area;
  - 5. Assign responding units to specific tasks, such as to inner and outer-perimeter security and search teams;
  - 6. Coordinate with other supervisors or agencies for additional assistance and support;
  - 7. Maintain a current Bomb Threat Checklist and keep updated when additional information is obtained from witnesses and other agency personnel;
  - 8. Make initial contact with the property owner/person in authority to determine whether evacuation procedures will be initiated;
  - 9. Insure all response personnel keep accurate written information concerning the identity of witnesses and/or suspicious personnel;
  - 10. Request that the Rabun County Central Communications Center dispatch Fire and EMS personnel to the designated assembly area for stand-by and further instructions;
  - 11. Establish an inner perimeter approximately 300 to 500 feet and an outer perimeter approximately 1000 feet around the incident scene;
  - 12. Provide the owner/responsible official with the results of any bomb search and
  - 13. Establish an on-scene Command Post from where all response activities can be coordinated.



## **XVI. ON-SCENE COMMAND POST**

- A. The Command Post should be initially positioned at a relatively safe area, between the inner and outer perimeters that is known to all response personnel, so that information may be exchanged and appropriate instructions given.
- B. The Command Post may have to be relocated, based upon the situation, to affect appropriate command and control of response measures.
- C. The Watch Commander shall remain near the Command Post if possible or where she/he can provide appropriate direction and supervision to response personnel until relieved by senior ranking personnel.
- D. Duties of Command Post personnel:
  - 1. Monitor on-going activities of response personnel;
  - 2. Coordinate with the Rabun County Central Communications Center for additional assistance;
  - 3. Maintain accountability of response personnel;
  - 4. Obtain blueprints or floor diagrams if possible or solicit assistance from property personnel in order to make rough sketches of the affected area;
  - 5. Establish primary and secondary methods of communications;
  - 6. Assign safe area for media personnel; and
  - 7. Insure Incident Report is initiated upon termination of incident.

## **XVII. SPECIAL BOMB THREAT SITUATIONS**

- A. Of special concern are situations that involve facilities that contain large numbers of personnel or an area that consists of multiple buildings. Such locations include:
  - 1. Schools;
  - 2. Rabun County Courthouse Complex;
  - 3. Rabun County Central Communications;
  - 4. Rabun County Detention Center;
  - 5. Office or storage building complexes;
  - 6. Restaurants;
  - 7. Outdoor sports facilities;
  - 8. Apartment Complexes;
  - 9. Day care centers;

10. Hospitals; and
  11. Other Public Buildings.
- B. Such locations will offer special response considerations for departmental personnel:
1. Increased media interest;
  2. The arrival of concerned family members;
  3. The need to account for large numbers of evacuated personnel;
  4. More people who require special assistance, such as the elderly, those who are ambulatory, the disabled, or the very young;
  5. Wide-spread panic, especially if alcohol is involved; and a large numbers of spectators and on-lookers.



By Order of the Sheriff: **Chad K. Nichols**  
Sheriff, Rabun County