

E-ACT POLICY

PARKWOOD ACADEMY

BOMB PROCEDURES

Date agreed by Governors	
Date of review	
Responsible officer	Principal / Business Director

BOMB PROCEDURES

Unattended items including bags, suspect packages, threatening telephone calls, security, police response, etc.

1. Introduction

As an inevitable consequence of the recent events in London there is increased manager and staff awareness of these issues. As one would expect higher levels of vigilance has resulted in an increase in the number of unattended bags seen and reported to managers.

This note is intended to assist managers and staff to effectively deal with reports of unattended items and/or threatening telephone calls. There is also advice on some precautions that can be taken to make premises more secure.

Bomb procedures are based on making decisions on the evidence that a particular incident presents. Unfortunately that does mean that this Guidance has to cover a number of possible sets of circumstances and there is rather a lot of information. Don't hesitate to follow up the offers of advice below.

2. Level of risk in our City

It is important to note that despite the effects in London and the fact that the threat to the UK remains at a critical level there is no **specific** threat to Sheffield or to any of building or service.

Police advice remains that all staff should remain vigilant and to take every day prudent security precautions. As stated above, increased vigilance has resulted in more unattended bags being reported as suspicious. In addition there remains the possibility that the Council may experience an increase in threatening hoax type telephone calls. As a result concerns among staff and service users could increase.

3. Co-operation

We are working closely with South Yorkshire Police Counter Terrorist Officers and have received helpful, practical and reassuring advice. A careful watch is being kept on any developments that may require the following procedures to be amended.

4. Partners

This procedure will be shared with key SCC partner organisations for information and possible assistance.

5. Documents

There are five documents with this note:

- Security improvements
- Unattended bag suspect package procedure
- Telephone threats
- What the Police are likely to ask if contacted
- Evacuation plans

August 2005 : Updated Guidance on Bomb Procedures

Unattended bag/suspect package procedure – found or reported unattended items

1. Staff should be aware that ***there is no specific threat to Sheffield/the City Council or its services.***
2. Our reactions to reported incidents should be based on sound reasoning. Staff should proceed cautiously and in a logical manner before deciding on an appropriate course of action.
3. You will find below a number of self-questions, which will assist you or your staff in assessing the threat level of any reported unattended item.
 - What information can be found about the item?
 - Did anyone see who had possession of it immediately prior to it being found unattended?
 - If any person was seen, were they acting in a suspicious manner?
 - Has there been any attempt to hide the object? (Innocently left items tend not to be hidden.)
4. Is the item the type of thing that your staff, visitors, service users generally bring onto the premises?

Example:

A service deals with homeless people. These customers often carry suitcases and black bin liners full of their belongings into the service area. In the past it has been very common for such bags to be left behind, either because the customer has forgotten to take them or they have been deliberately left behind because our service area is thought to be a “safe” place to leave belongings for a short period.

Unless items are obviously suspicious (eg, you can see batteries, wiring, switches or substances which look like explosives) and/or there is no other evidence to suggest that the item should be treated as suspicious then staff are urged to deal with the item as everyday lost/found property. Staff if they wish can, in order to establish ownership, examine any contents. Briefcases or suitcases can be opened to check for ownership details.

5. Supporting evidence that might raise concerns about an unattended bag/package could be:

- A publicised VIP visit to the location in question;
- Method of delivery,

Example:

A man dashes into a service reception point. He is not a Postman nor obviously from a courier company. He leaves a parcel on reception which is bound with tape and crudely addressed to a senior manager.

6. If any of the above features are observed then the following actions should be followed:

- Do not approach or touch the item further
- Make a note of its description and precise location
- Clear/cordon the area and ensure that the Police are contacted via the 999 emergency system
- The attached document ‘What the Police are likely to ask if contacted’ may help

7. On Police arrival the reporting member of staff should make themselves known to the officers and report his/her suspicions to them. The Police will give advice as to what actions need to be taken, however, the responsibility to decide whether to close the service, evacuate the premises will remain with Academy management.

Any reports of unattended items should not, without further supporting evidence, be justification to commence evacuation of a building. If supporting evidence however does exist to treat the item as suspicious and as a result the Police have been requested then consideration should be given to moving all persons from the immediate vicinity and putting into place effective cordons.

Staff should be aware that full evacuation can bring with it its own risks, particularly if vulnerable Service users are on site. As part of preparation plans it is worth thinking about where evacuation points might be sited and how these would work in practice in winter, on dark afternoons, or in wet/cold weather. There is more guidance on evacuation in the Evacuation Issues document.

8. Although the Police will attend as soon as they can, there may be other 999 calls at the same time. If the first officers who arrive call for support that will add time. If the “bomb squad” are called then they travel to Sheffield from out of the city. Managers, staff and service users need to be made aware that any disruption caused by a suspect package could last for several hours.

August 2005: Updated Guidance on Bomb Procedures

Security Improvements

1. The security arrangements 'built in' to SCC premises vary from building to building. Now is a good time to review them.
2. What are the access control arrangements – are they working, are they respected/followed by employees? Is a reminder needed?

Are visitors and contractors provided with ID?

Is it practical to escort visitors from reception to where they need to be?
3. Are messages about not leaving bags unattended needed? How might they be given?

Temporary or permanent signage may be useful in some settings.

Is it possible to include “and have you picked up all your bags and personal belongings” as a natural end to the service being given.
4. If you have CCTV, is it working the way you planned it would? Are recorded images clear? Does the CCTV need to be serviced?

If you have an intruder alarm, again, is it working properly?
5. Are staff and any security staff briefed on security and bomb procedures?

Do they know exactly what they need to do?
6. Good housekeeping is a big contribution. It means that unusual bags etc. will stand out and if you ever need to search following a telephone threat the search would be easier.
7. If there is a system of routine checks of premises, eg, by Caretaker, Security staff, Cleaners, etc, is it practical to record this. Being able to say with confidence “we know there was no bag here this morning so it must have been left recently” can be helpful. Remember – what people are looking out for are things that don't belong here.

Updated Guidance on Bomb Procedures

Telephone Threats

1. With all the increased news coverage it is possible that the number of malicious calls about bombs might increase.
2. There are some things that managers can do to help improve the handling of telephone warnings should one be received.
 - i) If possible within your Service improve access control. This can significantly reduce the areas into which something could have been placed i.e. it reduces the areas you might have to search
 - ii) Reminding all employees who have telephone numbers that are accessed from outside to keep calm and take down as much information as possible. This will help with your common sense risk assessment in 3 below
 - iii) Where you have a limited number of points of telephone contact e.g. a secretarial office, admin office, switchboard. It is worth a more detailed briefing and having a copy of the South Yorkshire Police Telephone Bomb Threat check list to hand.
3. As manager, the initial assessment of what to do will be for you to carry out. This is largely a common sense process.
 - There is no specific threat to Sheffield. There is no indication that any Council building or Service is at risk.
 - Is there anything happening that might increase this risk, or indeed make you a target? e.g. VIP visit. In this case dial 999 right away.
 - What was said? How did the caller sound?

Example

A sports centre regularly has to ask young people who are hanging around and not taking part in events to leave the site. Verbal abuse and bravado are common when this happens. If a call is received and the employee who took it notes:

“caller sounded like a child and there was the sound of children talking and laughing in the background”

It is safe to assume this is just an attempt to cause disruption.

4. If a search is prudent then think about where someone could gain access. Ask staff to search their own areas – they will know what is usually here and more likely to spot something out of place.
5. If something is found then refer to the unattended by/suspect package procedure.

Updated Guidance on Bomb Procedures

What the Police are likely to ask if contacted about a bomb threat or suspect package

1. If a call is made to the Police they will need information to help them consider what to do and how to assist us. The Police are likely to ask for:
 - Description of the package (they may refer to a “device”) and its location. They will ask questions to get as clear a picture of what they are dealing with.
 - What are the best/easiest access routes. It would be helpful if doors and gates leading to the location are left open for them. If this is not practical, then can they be staffed so that they can be opened immediately on the Police’s arrival?
 - If it is possible for a digital photo to be taken, even on a mobile ‘phone, or for the person who has seen the package to sketch it, as this could help the Police when they arrive. There is a balance here of personal safety. Staff shouldn’t return to a package just to get a photo.
 - Who has access to the area. Both staff access, service users and/or the general public.
 - If a decision was taken to evacuate then:
 - who has left the building;
 - does anyone remain inside;
 - where have people gone to;
 - how many people are at the assembly point.
 - If there is CCTV coverage, then can this be accessed. If so where and how?

The Police will want to look at CCTV images to look at the location and the package and if possible to look back at when it was left.

2. We need to remember that the Police will not make the decision to cease service provision and/or to evacuate the building. They will advise but the decision rests with the service manager.
3. The Police will not search our premises. If a search is needed then staff or our security personnel will need to do this. The main reason for this is that we know our premises and what should be here and what looks out of place.

Updated Guidance on Bomb Procedures

Evacuation in the event of a bomb threat or discovery of a suspect package

1. There is no automatic requirement to evacuate premises. There is advice in the attached documents:

Unattended bag/suspect packages;
Telephone threats.

2. **Planning**

Although reaction to a specific incident will depend on its own circumstances and evidence it is worth having a plan for all premises. You need to consider:

- what potential assembly points are available. You will need to identify more than one – three would be ideal. This is to give you flexibility if staff need to move away from a suspect package;
 - are these assembly points suitable in bad weather, on dark evenings or at night if you are a 24 hour service;
 - do all employees know where to go;
 - who will conduct a head count;
 - are there customer evacuation issues;
 - who will liaise with the Police and communicate between the Police and people at the assembly point;
 - do you need to work with other employers near by, eg, are you all going to look at the same spot as an assembly point and would it then become overcrowded.
3. If you do evacuate, it will probably be for some length of time. If the “bomb squad” are called they will need to travel to the city and you may not re-open for business for some hours.