

## GUIDANCE ON HANDLING BOMB THREATS

### 1. Characteristics of Bomb Threats

1.1 Bomb threat may be directed against:

- (a) aircraft:
  - (i) on the ground; or
  - (ii) in the air.
- (b) airports:
  - (i) airport installations, facilities and buildings; or
  - (ii) navigation aids on or in the immediate vicinity of airports.
- (c) air cargo agents
  - (i) cargo designated for shipment by air; or
  - (ii) cargo agent installations, facilities and buildings

1.2 Bomb threats are usually anonymous and communicated by telephone. Written threats are rare. Bomb threats are usually intended to cause a nuisance, but they may presage an act of terrorism or criminal intent. Each threat must be assessed to determine its significance and the risk it represents so that appropriate measures may be implemented.

### 2. Contingency Plans

2.1 Contingency plans should provide for:

- (a) a controlled response by persons receiving bomb warnings;
- (b) an assessment of the warning and the risk involved, by designated and accredited personnel (Bomb Threat Assessors / PNP AVSEGROUP Special Operations Unit) employing Positive Target Identification (PTI).
- (c) coordination of action appropriate to the risk as assessed;
- (d) detection of persons responsible for bomb warnings; and
- (e) follow-up action.

2.2 Contingency plans should be exercised frequently.

### **3. Receipt of Bomb Threats**

3.1 Telephoned bomb threats may be received by airports, aircraft operators and cargo agents either directly from the people issuing the threats or from intermediaries (e.g. the media, press agencies etc). In either case, recipients should endeavour to obtain as much information as possible about the warning in order to facilitate assessment of it and identification of the person issuing it. (See Appendix 1)

### **4. Staff Instructions and Training**

4.1 Staff who are likely to receive bomb warning calls, telephonists and sales staff, should be briefed on the subject on taking up their duties, and the responses required from them should be incorporated into appropriate staff instructions.

4.2 They should be provided with checklists to facilitate their reactions. Supervisors should be similarly aware of the response required and of the need to relay information about bomb warnings to Bomb Assessors.

### **5. Action by Recipient**

5.1 People receiving warnings directly should:

- (a) listen carefully and make a note of the actual words used by the caller;
- (b) either take action to trace the call or alert a colleague in order that they may do so;
- (c) take such action as may be necessary to tape record the call, where this is not done automatically;
- (d) prolong the call to obtain as much information as possible;
- (e) ask the caller:
  - (i) WHERE is the bomb?
  - (ii) WHEN will it go off?
  - (iii) WHAT does it look like?
  - (iv) WHY are you doing this?
  - (v) WHO are you?

Note: These should be posed as open questions rather than as leading questions. For example, ask: "Where exactly is the bomb?" rather than, "Is the bomb in the hold of the aircraft?"

(f) if possible, test the credibility of the caller by making up a non-existent flight number, flight time or location and asking the caller whether that is the one to which he or she is referring.

(g) inform a supervisor who will, in turn, inform:

(i) the Bomb Threat Assessor / AVSEGROUP SOU; and

(ii) the police; and

(iii) the Administrator OTS.

5.2 People receiving calls from intermediaries should:

(a) ask for, and make written note of, the precise time at which the warning was issued and the exact words used by the caller; and

(b) ask whether the intermediary obtained answers to any of the questions detailed above, and about the origin of the call and the caller's identity, using the headings on the reverse of the Bomb Warning Report Form (Appendix 1)

5.3 The recipient of a written bomb warning should preserve the message and deliver it to the supervisor with precise information about its discovery. Messages discovered in flight should be referred to the aircraft captain immediately.

5.4 Supervisors should interview the recipient of any call or message in order to complete the Bomb Warning Report Form (Appendix 1), and relay it without delay to the Bomb Warning Assessor.

## **6. Bomb Warning Assessment on the Ground**

6.1 Assessment of the risk posed by a bomb warning is the responsibility of the aircraft operator, airport management or cargo agent against which the warning has been issued.

6.2 Where a warning is received against an aircraft on the ground, the targeted aircraft operator and the appropriate airport authorities should agree an assessment.

6.3 Bomb warning assessment carries substantial responsibility. Aircraft operators, airport authorities and cargo agents should therefore ensure that Bomb Warning Assessors are appropriately trained. Each aircraft operator, airport and cargo agent should have at least one assessor on duty or on call within the company at all times.

6.4 Aircraft operators may require their captains to refer bomb warnings received on board aircraft in flight to operations staff on the ground for assessment, or they may authorise captains to assess warnings themselves. Where captains are authorised to assess bomb warnings, they should be provided with guidance in accordance with paragraph 6.6.

6.5 The assessor should obtain full details of the warning message ó ideally in the form of a completed Bomb Warning Report Form (Appendix 1) ó from the person who received it and by the fastest possible means.

6.6 Every bomb threat is, prima facie, a criminal offence and must be reported to the police immediately (see paragraph 5.1), and to the aircraft operator, cargo agent and / or airport authority as appropriate. The views of the police may be taken into account when the warning message is being assessed and in determining what further action should be taken.

6.7 The Bomb Warning Assessor should assess the warning by working methodically through the Bomb Warning Assessment Form (Appendix 2). The form is designed to lead the assessor to a logical assessment of the warning as RED, AMBER or GREEN. Although this procedure is largely dependent upon the provision of öYesö or öNoö answers to a series of questions, the assessor must also take account of other factors that may bear upon the credibility of the warning ó particularly the Background Data in the box on the Bomb Warning Assessment Form, which includes the characteristics of the call as described on the Bomb Warning Report. Key guidance for assessors may be found on the reverse of the Bomb Warning Assessment Form.

## **7. Bomb Warning Assessment in the Air**

7.1 Bomb warnings discovered on board aircraft in flight are likely to be spurious, but each should be considered on its merits in order to assess the risks involved. Where aircraft captains are authorised to assess warnings, Aircraft operators should provide them with guidance to enable them to assess the risks and decide upon a course of action; they should consider the following:

(a) The circumstances surrounding the warning to determine if it originated before the aircraft's departure or during the flight. A captain should consider whether the warning could have been discovered during the pre-flight search or check of the aircraft, or at an earlier stage in the flight. If he concludes that the author of the warning is on board and would be affected by an explosion, the warning is likely to be a hoax.

(b) The precise wording of the warning, to determine whether it suggests there is a credible reason for the warning having been given. A warning is most likely to be genuine if there is a reason for it, such as a desire to avoid the casualties that would result from an explosion. It is likely that a person issuing such a warning will seek to ensure that it gets through and that there is time to react to it. Where no clear reason for the warning can be adduced, the warning is less likely to be genuine.

(c) Whether there is any person on board, (e.g. a political figure or other well known person), who might attract a threat.

(d) Whether there are passengers on board who might be responsible for a warning, (e.g. a potentially disruptive passenger, deportee or inadmissible, young people or rowdy passengers).

(e) Whether the aircraft operator's operations centre can be contacted by radio, to establish whether this is an isolated incident or one of a series of similar events affecting the aircraft operator.

(f) If the captain is not satisfied that the incident is a hoax, he should seek information through the aircraft operator's operations centre about:

(i) the current threat to the aircraft operator's interests at the airport of departure, with a view to establishing whether there are credible motives for attacking the aircraft or disrupting the flight;

(ii) the quality of security measures at the airport of departure, i.e. where there is / are:

- Effective screening and searching of passengers and baggage;
- Procedures to ensure that passengers who have checked in baggage have actually joined the flight;
- Supervision of baggage between check-in and the aircraft;
- Security measures in respect of catering supplies;
- Control of access to aircraft.

Which should have made it more difficult to place a bomb on board and militate against the warning being genuine;

(iii) cargo and unaccompanied hold baggage on board that may have presented someone with an opportunity to infiltrate an explosive device on board the aircraft;

Note: It is for aircraft operators to develop procedures for making such information available to captains with the least possible delay.

## **8. Action**

8.1 In consultation with the police and other appropriate agencies, each aircraft operator, airport and cargo agent should develop contingency plans to be implemented when bomb warnings issued against it are assessed as RED or AMBER

to reduce the risks arising from such bomb warnings. Actions which should be included in these contingency plans are outlined in Appendix 3.

## **9. Deterring and Detecting Persons Responsible for Bomb Warnings**

9.1 Details of bomb warning incidents should be recorded by aircraft operators, airports and air cargo agents and reported on a Bomb Warning Report (Appendix 1 to Annex R) to the Director General of Civil Aviation so that trends may be considered, and to the police in order that the circumstances may be investigated.

9.2 Aircraft operators, airports and cargo agents should install tape recording facilities on appropriate exchanges and / or telephones. Continuous loop equipment, which should be kept running continuously, is preferable to conventional recording equipment which must be switched on when a recording is to be made. When a bomb warning has been recorded, the tape should be retained as evidence.

**APPENDIX 1 TO  
ANNEX P**

***BOMB WARNING REPORT*** (Alternatives must be approved by the Administrator, Office for Transportation Security)

***THIS FORM SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY A SUPERVISOR OR POLICE OFFICER AND FORWARDED IMMEDIATELY TO:***

- (1) ***THE COMPANY BOMB WARNING ASSESSOR***
- (2) ***THE POLICE***
- (3) ***THE ADMINISTRATOR, OTS***

***From:*** ..... (Company) ***Date:*** ..... ***Time:*** .....

***Person to whom enquiries should be directed:*** .....

***MESSAGE: Exact language used:***

***WHERE IS THE BOMB?***

<b><i>TERMINAL</i></b>	<b><i>FUEL FARM</i></b>	<b><i>CARGO AREA</i></b>
<b><i>AIRCRAFT OPERATOR PREMISES</i></b>	<b><i>HANDLING AGENT</i></b>	<b><i>OTHER</i></b>
<b><i>TO:</i></b> .....	<b><i>DETAILS:</i></b>	
<b><i>Did the caller appear familiar with the aircraft or building by the description of the bomb location?</i></b>		

***WHEN WILL IT EXPLODE?***

<b><i>TIME</i></b>	<b><i>DAY</i></b>	<b><i>DATE</i></b>
<b><i>IN FLIGHT</i></b>	<b><i>IF MOVED</i></b>	<b><i>OTHER</i></b>

***WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?***

<b><i>BRIEFCASE</i></b>	<b><i>CARRIER BAG</i></b>	<b><i>SUITCASE</i></b>
<b><i>BOX</i></b>	<b><i>OTHER</i></b>	

***WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?***

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***WHO ARE YOU?***

<b><i>ORGANISATION</i></b> .....	<b><i>NAME</i></b> .....
<b><i>WHERE ARE YOU NOW?</i></b>	

**BACKGROUND DETAIL** (Circle appropriate answers)

**ORIGIN OF CALL**      **PAY PHONE**      **PRIVATE PHONE**      **INTERNAL**

**NUMBER DIALLED BY CALLER:** .....

**CALLER'S IDENTITY:** Sex: ..... **Approximate Age:** .....

<b><u>VOICE CHARACTERISTICS</u></b>		<b><u>SPEECH</u></b>		<b><u>BACKGROUND NOISE</u></b>
Loud	Soft	Fast	Slow	Quiet
High pitched	Deep	Distinct	Distorted	Mixed
Rasping	Pleasant	Stutter	Nasal	Trains
Intoxicated	Other	Slurred	Other	Music
				Voices
				Kitchen
				Aircraft
				Animals
				Office machines
				Factory machines
				Street traffic
				Party
				Other
<b><u>ACCENT</u></b>		<b><u>MANNER</u></b>		
Local	Foreign	Calm	Angry	
Other	Other	Rational	Irrational	
		Coherent	Incoherent	
		Deliberate	Emotional	
		Righteous	Laughing	
		Obscene	Proper	

<b><u>Command of language:</u></b> Excellent      Good      Fair      Poor
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**NAME OF PERSON WHO RECEIVED THE WARNING:** .....

**APPOINTMENT:** ..... **TEL NO:** .....

**PASSED TO (NAME):** .....

**APPOINTMENT:** ..... **TEL NO:** .....

**DATE:** ..... **TIME:** .....

**SIGNED:** .....

APPENDIX 2 to  
ANNEX P

RESTRICTED

BOMB WARNING ASSESSMENT

KEY: YES: ✓ NO: X

DATE: TIME RECD:

Protective Security: PS

WARNING DETAILS

FROM:	FLT No:	ROUTE:	POLICE AWARE?
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Time (24 hour clock):                      Location:                      Received by:                      Staff No:  
Who advised Ops Control?                      Name:                      Position:                      Tel:                      SITTA:  
Telephone No. used:                      Location of Receiving Phone:                      AFTN:

Exact wording of threat:

Threat Assessment	✓ / X
Assessors: Controller of Operations	
Controller (Security)	
Other / Police	

Taped? Yes / No:                      Tracing Action? Yes / No:                      Comment:

1A

1B

Has specific aircraft been identified?	✓ / X
Flight number or carrier specified?	
Departure time specified?	
Flight destination or Route specified?	
Location of aircraft given?	
Type of aircraft identified?	

Has specific ground facility been identified?	✓ / X
Airport / installation named?	
Terminal building specified?	
Airline facility specified?	

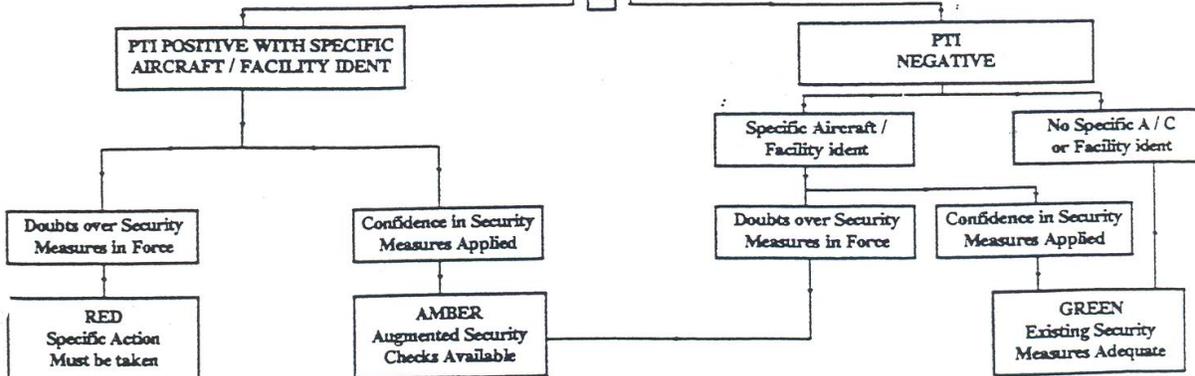
2

Positive Target Identification	✓ / X	Comment
Aircraft registration specified?		
Exact location of device specified?		
Detailed technical description of device?		
Specific description of bag or place / means of concealment?		
Individual passenger(s) or crew member(s) specified?		
Terrorist or other organisation named?		
Terrorist code word used? (Check with Police)		
Extortion or political demand made?		
Industry type terms used?		
Other information offered indicating unique knowledge?		

3

Background Data	✓ / X	Influencing Factors
Recent history of warnings and incidents		
Influence of current events		
High profile person(s) at airport / on flight		
Late passengers for flight?		
Additional security measures taken?		
Nature of call indicates that it is spurious?		
Police / Local security authority's opinion of warning (if applicable)		
Status / Name of local responsible official (if applicable)		

4



N.B Specific aircraft / ground facility and PTI in 1A, 1B and 2 are positive if answers in the respective box to one question is "Yes"

RESTRICTED

**ACTION IN RESPONSE TO BOMB WARNINGS AGAINST AIRCRAFT**

**1. General**

1.1 Responsibility for an aircraft is primarily a matter for the aircraft operator concerned.

**2. Aircraft on the Ground**

2.1 When a bomb warning is associated with an aircraft on the ground, and once the warning has been assessed, the following actions should be considered by aircraft operator representatives (and, where appropriate, aircraft captains) in consultation with airport authorities:

- (a) disembark passengers and crew with all cabin baggage by steps or jetties. Escape slides should only be used in extreme emergencies;
- (b) move the aircraft to a remote location;
- (c) unload hold baggage;
- (d) unload cargo;
- (e) search the aircraft;
- (f) require passengers to identify their hold baggage, which should then be screened or searched before it is re-loaded;
- (g) check the integrity of catering supplies;
- (h) reload cargo, diplomatic bags and courier mail only if they have been in the aircraft operator's custody for 24 hours or they have been screened or searched.

**3. Aircraft in Flight**

3.1 When a bomb warning is associated with an aircraft in flight, and once the warning has been assessed, the aircraft operator or his agent should consider contacting the aircraft captain, directly or through the air traffic control service, to provide him with information about the warning and advice about how to respond. On receipt of the information, the captain should require a discreet search of the aircraft, insofar as this is possible in flight.

3.2 When, having received a bomb warning, an aircraft operator or an aircraft captain thinks it unlikely that there is a bomb on board the aircraft but wish to be prudent ó before committing for example, to a long-haul flight ó the aircraft should

be diverted to an airfield at which it can land safely. Once it has landed, consideration should be given to taking the actions described in paragraph 2.1 above.

3.3 When an aircraft captain has reasonable grounds for believing that there is a bomb on board his aircraft, he should consider the potential effects of an explosion on board the aircraft on people on the ground, particularly within densely populated areas. He should be guided by the following:

(a) An emergency should be declared stating the nature of the emergency, and the aircraft should be diverted to the nearest airfield at which it can land safely, either civil or military.

(b) When the aircraft is not over a densely populated areas, it should be flown to the nearest suitable airfield, avoiding such areas.

(c) When the aircraft is making an approach to land over a densely populated area, it should be permitted to land at that airport in accordance with current emergency procedures. Its time in the air should not be prolonged in order to divert to another airfield.

(d) If immediate landing cannot be made, consideration should be given to seeking expert advice by communicating on HF single sideband (SSB) radio and with a ground station which will, in turn, provide a landline link with [*appropriate EOD agency*] The captain may also consider making discreet inquiries to establish whether any passenger has bomb disposal (BD) or explosive ordnance (EOD) expertise. Only the initials for these skills should be used in order to reduce the likelihood of alarming other passengers.

3.4 In addition to the advice at paragraph 3.3 above, if a suspicious item is discovered on board an aircraft, the captain may direct that:

(a) it should not be moved, touched or opened;

(b) passengers should be moved as far away as possible and instructed to keep their heads below the tops of the seat backs;

(c) portable oxygen, bottles of alcohol and first aid kits should be removed from the vicinity. Fire extinguishers should be readily available.

3.5 If an immediate landing can be made, the item should be left in place, covered with polythene and then packed around with pillows, blankets, coats and other blast absorbent materials. The item itself must be kept dry (hence the polythene) but surrounding materials should be wet in order to reduce the risk of fire.

3.6 If an immediate landing cannot be made, the captain should take the expert advice in paragraph 3.3 (d) above and consider moving the item, especially if its position poses a real threat to the aircraft. Reference to the Aircraft Flying manual will identify the type-specific Least Risk Bomb Location (LRBL). If this is a door, a platform of hard, blast attenuating materials, such as cabin baggage, should be made up to the centre of the floor, ready to receive the item.

3.7 It is most unlikely that a bomb on an aircraft will be fitted with any anti-handling device. Nevertheless, if it is to be moved:

(a) it should not be opened;

(b) a check should be made to ensure that it is free to move ó i.e. that there is for example, no thread joining it to the aircraft structure;

(c) it should be moved gently and kept in the same attitude in which it was found;

(d) it should be placed, in the same attitude, in the prepared LRBL, packed around as described at paragraph 3.6 above, and suitably restrained against movement during flight or during deceleration or landing.

3.8 If no suspicious item has been found and an immediate landing cannot be made, the captain should consider the following:

(a) Although a bomb warning may have been received and assessed as RED, the likelihood of an explosive device being on board is low. The aircraft should be flown as normally as possible, striking a balance between the need for a rapid landing and the risk arising from undue haste.

(b) Declare an emergency and divert to the nearest suitable airfield. The choice of airfield should take into account landing performance requirements, approach aids, emergency facilities and the proximity of approach paths to densely populated areas.

(c) Keep air traffic control fully briefed on flight intentions so that appropriate ground measures can be initiated at the airfield of intended landing.

(d) Brief cabin crew to be prepared for a possible emergency landing.

(e) Prepare for possible use of crew oxygen / smoke masks;

(f) If operationally possible, reduce the cabin differential pressure to zero by descending the aircraft to cabin altitude. Do not raise the cabin altitude. Maintain this cabin altitude until top of descent. When minimum Safe Altitude (MSA) and range considerations permit, descend aircraft to below 10,000 feet.

(g) Minimise manoeuvres and try to avoid turbulence.

(h) Consider carefully the choice between flying fast to minimise airborne time and flying slowly to minimise air loads and damage in the event of fuselage rupture. In most cases, the turbulent air penetration speed will be a reasonable compromise.

(i) Consider establishing landing configuration as soon as possible.

(j) On contacting the airfield of landing, request details of remote parking requirements and immediate availability of passenger steps. Advise airfield of need to remove passengers from vicinity of the aircraft to at least 200m in an upwind direction as quickly as possible.

3.9 When an aircraft lands following receipt of a bomb warning that has been assessed as other than GREEN, provision should be made to disembark passengers and crew with a minimum of delay (with their cabin baggage when circumstances permit), to provide the emergency services necessary to preserve life and prevent injury, and to place the aircraft where it will not hazard people or premises in the event of an explosion; and the actions listed at paragraph 2.1 (c) to (f) above should also be considered.

3.10 Airport operators have discharged their responsibilities when the aircraft's passengers and crew are safe and the aircraft is in a safe location. Decisions affecting resumption of the aircraft's operations are the responsibility of the aircraft operator.

3.11 When a warning is judged to be spurious, or current security measures are considered adequate to meet the degree of risk involved, no action need be taken, although the Director General of Civil Aviation should be alerted.