

# EFCOG SSWG PHYSICAL PROTECTION SUBGOU

## Standardized Response to Suspicious Packages and Explosives Device Response Best Practice

**Best Practice Title:** Standardized response to Suspicious Packages and Explosives Device Response.

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**Brief Description of Best Practice:** Provided a standardized response to Suspicious Package and Explosive Device Response through training of the site's workforce, first responders, and providing education to visitors and civilians who may work in and around the site facilities. To help standardize these efforts across the site the use of the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) processes was included in guidance and training documents.

The site ensures a strong culture of security through campaigns that mirror DHS, posted signs inform visitors of who to notify in an event, trained escorts receive emergency response training on what to do with those they are escorting, procedures for the site workforce were developed and reporting cards are placed near all work phones.

First responders and emergency personnel are trained in Unified Incident Command protocols and through drills and real events practice these responses at frequent intervals. In addition, first responders are given direction and education on standoff distances, provided training on proper radio and cell phone use around a suspicious item, how to cordon off an area, and how to dispose of a device properly.

**Why the best practice was used:** Explosive Devices (ED), Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), and Vehicle Born Explosive Devices (VBED) are one of the most devastating and effective weapons within the arsenal of Domestic and Foreign Terrorist organizations. As such, there is increased potential for use of one or more against government facilities and their contractors. To provide the safest and most effective response to such devices first responders to include Protective Force personnel, employees, and even civilians who may work in and around the area should take a standardized approach in response to suspicious packages.

**What are the benefits of the best practice:** By providing a standardized approach to the response of suspicious packages and explosive devices, it helps ensure the safety of the first responders and the employees or civilians that may work in and around the device's location. The overall goal of responding to such events is the protection of life and to a lesser degree property.

In addition, by ensuring that site processes mirror those provided by the DHS, it ensures continuity across lines when additional resources are needed to deal with a suspicious package, such as Explosive Ordnance Disposal or Local Law Enforcement/First Responder Agencies.

**What problems/issues were associated with the best practice:** Providing a standardized approach to Suspicious Package response amongst the entirety of the workforce is problematic in that each subgroup of that workforce's approach and response is different. A first responder's arrival on the scene may not be the first contact made with such a device, and an untrained workforce may cause panic which only further complicates the problem. To counter this issue a site must maintain a positive culture for security, where security professionals act as a resource for the site's workforce in both education and training.

Complicating this problem further is the civilian populace that may have access to certain areas within or around a site. Though we cannot train or always control the civilian populace we can provide direction through postings, signage, and information cards. In addition, visitors must be provided education on what to do during an emergency event, such as a suspicious package, and provided trained and competent escorts who understand their role and the proper response to these events.

By providing initial and continued education and training to first responders and the site populace and by providing educational and information to civilians and visitors many of the issues associated with a chaotic, non-standardized response can be curtailed.

**How the success of the Best Practice was measured:** The site Emergency Preparedness group currently performs drills at regular intervals with the site populace to ensure that proper actions and notifications are made to first responders. First responders take part in these same drills to ensure their own processes are followed, unified command is established between first responder organizations, proper standoff distances are maintained through cordon actions, and the protection of the site workforce is taken into consideration.

In addition, first responding organizations conduct additional training and drills on their portions of the response, since in most cases their portions are more technical in nature. In all cases these responses mirror DHS processes to ensure continuity of operations with outside responders.

In all cases this training is documented and recorded with identified deficiencies being noted. These deficiencies are then used to create follow on training and education pieces to ensure that site personnel are effective in their response. In cases where catastrophic deficiencies are noted, immediate retraining is conducted, and follow-on drills occur to ensure the training was effective.

**Description of process experience using the Best Practice:** This nation has been victim to ED, IED, and VBED attacks against its assets and people on both foreign and domestic soil. As such establishing a standardized response is necessary to ensure the protection of domestic assets at DOE facilities. Though detection of these devices is another critical piece of the process, a standardized response is necessary to mitigate damage and losses if those detection processes are circumvented. Listed below are a few key points to consider:

- Mirror a response utilized by your locality, good place to start is the DHS.
- Promote a security culture that promotes reporting – If You See Something, Say Something® | Homeland Security (dhs.gov).
- Provide initial and reoccurring education to the site populace.
- Provide information postings on who and how to report suspicious packages.
- Provide checklists and procedures to site personnel and make them assessable – Bomb Threat Procedure Checklist (cisa.gov).
- Provide standardized training to first responders.
- Practice Unified Command processes.
- Provide first responders the appropriate tools for a safe response and limit radio and cell phone usage to safe distances – DHS-DOJ Bomb Threat Stand-off Card.
- Conduct drills and record the results to ensure site personnel are effective in their response.
- Provide feedback and follow-on training as needed.