

UNATTENDED / SUSPICIOUS ITEMS



Homeland
Security

Office for Bombing Prevention

Definitions

Unattended Item is an item, package, or vehicle of unknown origin and content. There are no obvious signs of being suspicious (no strange odor, no wires hanging from the item or signs of being altered).

Suspicious Item is an item, package or vehicle that has indications of containing an explosive device. It may have wires exposed, leaking fluids, and/or an odd odor that could smell like cleaning detergents or petroleum products. All suspicious items will be cleared by the local Bomb Squad.

NOTE: Occupants, because of their familiarity with the space where they work, can most easily spot something that does not belong there. The primary hazard associated with a suspicious item is the threat of explosion or contamination. As a result, suspicious items should be treated with extreme caution and response time is important.

Actions Required Unattended Item

Take the following actions:

- Leave the item exactly where it is. **DO NOT TOUCH.**
- If lights or other electrical or mechanical devices in the area are on leave them on. If they are off leave them off.
- Maintain control of the area and item.
- Establish safe distances by utilizing the DHS/FBI Bomb Threat Stand-Off Card.
- Immediately notify your supervisor. Be prepared to provide a description of the item and its location.
 - Cell phone and radio communication should be as far as possible from the location without losing control of the scene.
- Keep witnesses to the initial discovery of the item in a safe area.
- Be aware of the potential for a secondary device.**
- Monitor the item and ensure no disturbance of the item occurs.
- Answer the following questions. If the answer to any of the questions is **YES** then treat the item as suspicious and proceed to the **Actions Required Suspicious Item** section below.
 - Is the Item at or near a potential terrorist target?
 - Have there been any bomb threats or intelligence regarding a bomb threat?
 - Has there been any recent suspicious activity?
 - Was the item hidden or attempted to be hidden?
 - Is it located near a high traffic or queuing area?
 - Is the item unusual for its surroundings?
- Only if the answers to **ALL** of the above questions are **NO** should you consider the item to be an unattended item. At any point during the examination of the item you become suspicious, treat the item as suspicious.
- Interview complainant and witnesses, review CCV footage, and have the vehicle license plates checked if applicable.
- Attempt to determine the owner/custodian of the item.
- Notify owner/custodian to retrieve the item if inquiry reveals the identity of the owner/custodian of the article.
- If ownership of the item cannot be determined or the owner cannot be reached request Explosive Detection Dog Team response if available. If not available, follow the Suspicious Item Actions below.

NOTE: If a package, bag, item, or vehicle is deemed suspicious for any reason, Explosive Detection Dog (K-9) Teams will not be used to inspect suspicious packages, bags, items, or vehicles. While the K-9 is an effective tool for alerting law enforcement personnel to the possible presence of explosives, it is not the final diagnostic tool. This is the responsibility of trained bomb squads. If an item is deemed to be suspicious, the determination that explosives may be contained in the item has already been made.

- If the K-9 Officer determines the item to be suspicious then proceed to the **Suspicious Item Actions** below.
- If the K-9 Officer determines the item not to be suspicious it can be physically examined.
 - Keep area clear.
 - Remove cell phone and radios from your person.
 - Put on full finger style gloves to create a barrier to the skin.
 - Carefully examine the exterior then interior of the item to determine if it is suspicious.
 - Attempt to establish ownership of the item.
 - If ownership cannot be determined contact supervisor for disposition instructions.

Enter all information in your log and prepare the necessary reports.

Actions Required — Suspicious Item

Take the following actions:

- Leave the item exactly where it is. **DO NOT TOUCH.**
- If lights or other electrical or mechanical devices are on in the area leave them on. If they are off leave them off.
- You are responsible to maintain control of the area and item.
- Immediately notify your supervisor. Be prepared to provide a description of the item and its location.
 - Cell phone and radio communication should be as far as possible from the location without losing control of the scene.
- Witnesses to the initial discovery of the item should be kept in a safe area.
- **Be aware of the potential for a secondary device.**
- Monitor the item and ensure no disturbance of the item occurs.
- Evacuate immediate area and establish a perimeter.
- It may be necessary to evacuate the building – this order will come from the Designated Official based on recommendations from local first responders or your supervisor, based on the totality of the circumstances.
 - If the building is evacuated, ensure unauthorized person(s) do not enter.
- Begin an evacuation from areas that may be immediately impacted upon a detonation and establish safe distances by utilizing the DHS/FBI Bomb Threat Stand-Off Card.
- Select routes and assembly areas that are away from the suspect item in the event an evacuation of the facility is initiated.
- Utilize other officers to search for secondary devices and suspicious persons in the area.
- Use the information gathered during the search for secondary devices to establish or revise evacuation routes and assembly areas.
- Search all designated assembly areas for secondary devices.
- Meet arriving emergency responders and brief them, letting them speak with person(s) who found the item and inform them where the item is located.
- If the item is in a securable space, such as a private office, leave the office and close the door.
- If the item is in a large office area, have people move to a secure area outside of the large office area and close off the affected area.
- Release control of the scene when relieved by Law Enforcement personnel.
- Assist emergency service with containing the scene.
- Enter all information in your log and prepare the necessary reports.
- Once the event has ended and the building declared safe for re-entry, conduct normal screening procedures for entry.

