

**Bomb Threat Response:**  
One College's Continuing Journey





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**Disclaimer**

Bomb threats can have long-lasting impacts on everyone involved. Responding to bomb threats should be part of your emergency planning and testing, including constant updating of your procedures based on best practices and lessons learned from real world incidents.

All materials in this presentation should be considered advisory in nature. What worked at one institution of higher education may not work at your institution. You should always consult with your governing body, leadership, local authorities and community partners, and legal counsel before initiating a new, or revising an existing policy or procedure.




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**Heartland Community College**

- Located in central Illinois community of Bloomington-Normal, IL.
- One of three institutions of higher education in the twin-cities.
- Serves all or parts of seven counties with a district population of 230,000 people.
- Three campuses, all located along I-55 spread out by 80 miles.
- 4,500 Credit students (Fall 2024)
- 9,670 Continuing Education and Adult Education students.
- 795 employees (all categories)
- Main campus, (Normal) 14 buildings plus the Corn Crib Stadium, (Normal Readiness Center/ING located on campus)
- 10 Athletic Teams, plus E-sports
- In-house Public Safety staff




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**Why do people use bombs?**

- Prominence in media
- Bringing attention to a cause
- Availability of manufacturing instructions
- Availability of explosive precursor materials
- Little cost to make devices
- Little expertise needed





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**Are bomb threats still happening?**




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**January to February 2022**

- HBCUs receive 50+ bomb threats

**Feb 8 to March 2, 2022**

- HBCUs receive an additional 19 bomb threats

**June 7 to November 2022**

- 250 threats to Colleges and Universities nationwide
- 7 additional threats to HBCUs
- 100 High Schools received threats
- 2 Junior High Schools received threats




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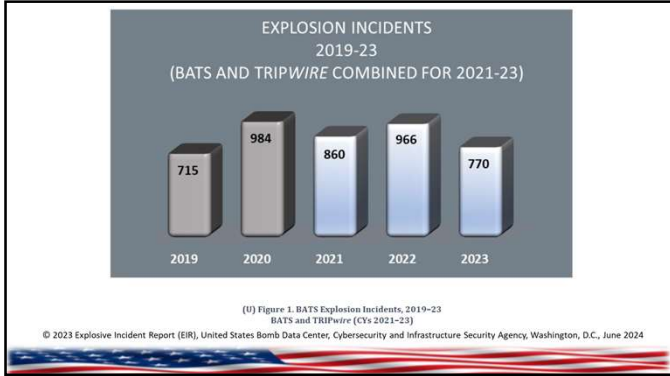
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**Bombings by State - CY2023**

STATES	TOTAL	STATES	TOTAL
ALABAMA	3	NEBRASKA	3
ARIZONA	8	NEW HAMPSHIRE	6
CALIFORNIA	58	NEW JERSEY	5
COLORADO	13	NEW MEXICO	2
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	4	NEW YORK	5
FLORIDA	20	NORTH CAROLINA	4
GEORGIA	3	OHIO	14
IDAHO	2	OKLAHOMA	3
ILLINOIS	7	OREGON	7
INDIANA	6	PENNSYLVANIA	28
IOWA	2	RHODE ISLAND	2
KANSAS	5	SOUTH CAROLINA	3
KENTUCKY	2	TENNESSEE	2
MARYLAND	27	TEXAS	6
MASSACHUSETTS	3	UTAH	7
MICHIGAN	3	VIRGINIA	3
MINNESOTA	5	WASHINGTON	30
MISSOURI	14	WISCONSIN	3
		WYOMING	2

(U) Figure 6. Bombings by State - Source: BATS and TRIPwire

© 2023 Explosive Incident Report (EIR), United States Bomb Data Center, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, Washington, D.C., June 2024

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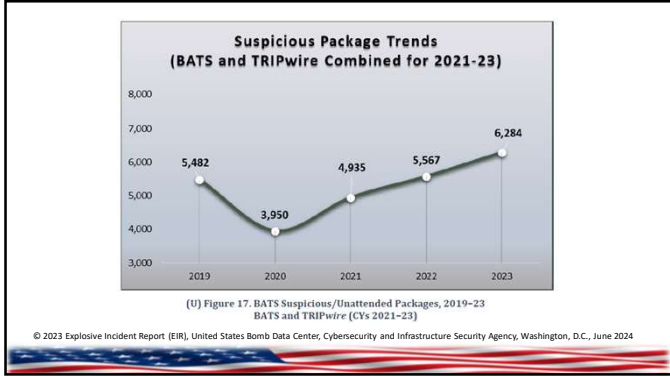
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Type	2022	2023	Difference
Book Bag / Purse	811	1,007	↑ 196
Cargo (commercial)	54	34	↓ -20
Letter / Envelope	97	182	↑ 85
Luggage / Briefcase	1,883	2,041	↑ 158
Other	844	900	↑ 56
Package / Parcel	798	794	↓ -4
Person	33	64	↑ 31
Powder (Without Envelope)	45	36	↓ -9
Suspicious Container	782	961	↑ 179
Under Investigation	1	0	↓ 1
Vehicle	127	206	↑ 79
Not Identified	92	59	↓ -33

(U) Figure 18. BATS Suspicious/Unattended Package Incident Types, 2023  
 Source: BATS and TRIPwire  
 © 2023 Explosive Incident Report (EIR), United States Bomb Data Center, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, Washington, D.C., June 2024

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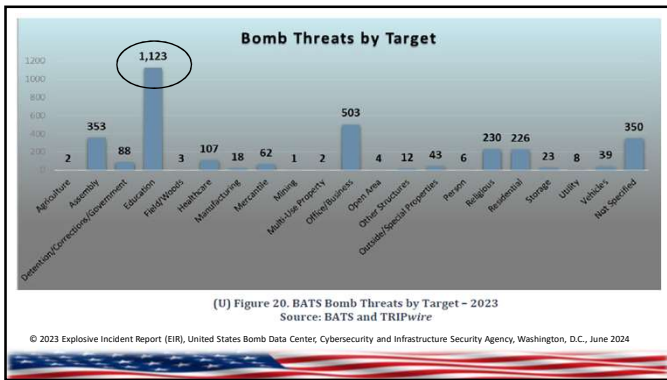
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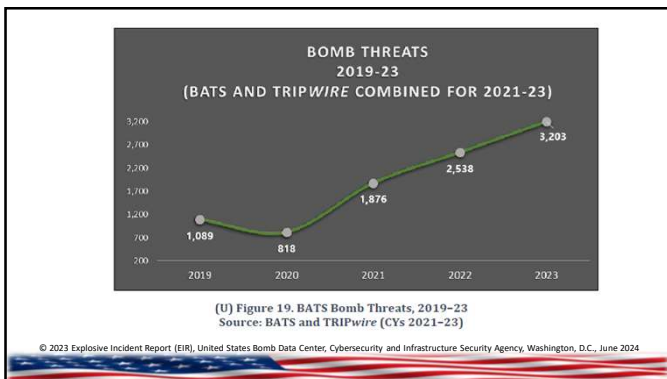
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Why does Heartland College  
have a bomb threat response  
plan and search team?




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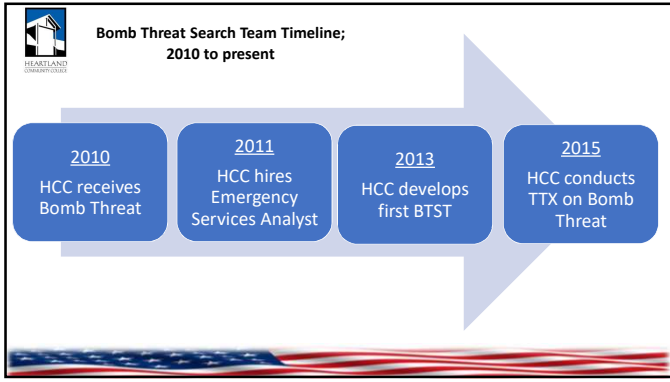
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**Don't the police search for bombs?**

- Searches by properly trained persons having familiarity with the facility has the greatest chance of finding suspicious items.
- Police and fire are not familiar with the facility and don't have the resources to do a full search on their own.
- Explosive Ordinance Units (EOD/Bomb Squad) are few and far between, and it can take at least an hour to arrive with their equipment.
- EOD units often will not respond until after a suspected device is located.
- Explosive bomb detection K-9s are available, but it will be at least one hour before they can arrive, and police K-9s are only useful for a short period of time.




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## Heartland's BTST Training Process





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 **Bomb Threat Search Team Training**

- Phase 1 • Bomb Threat Response and Searches
- Phase 2 • Response to Bombing Incidents
- Phase 3 • Practical Training Exercises




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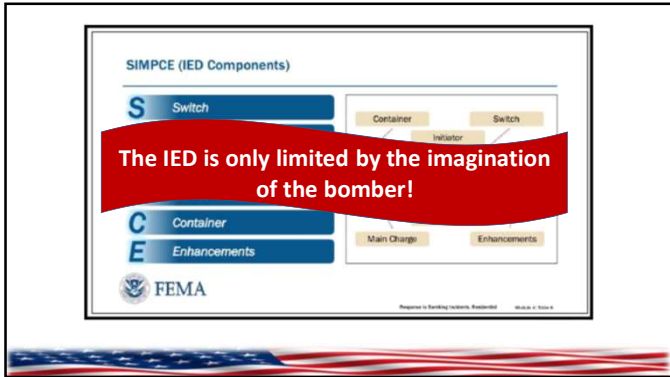
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**SEARCH PROCEDURE**  
**BOMB THREAT**

**Emergency Phone Numbers**  
Security Booth ..... 8300  
Facilities Hotline ..... 8450  
Emergency Hotline ..... 8492

**HEARTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**BOMB THREAT SEARCH PROCEDURE-GENERAL**

1. Report to Incident Command Post (ICP) for assignment.
2. Obtain search to which you are assigned for search.
3. Listen all cell phones and radios at the ICP.
4. Go to assigned area.
5. Search unattended lockers first.
6. Search remainder of building and work inward.
7. Work from the lowest floor and go up.

**BOMB THREAT SEARCH PROCEDURE-ROOM SPECIFIC**

1. Enter room from alternate doorway if possible.
2. Listen for unattended lockers.
3. Check the room for illegal notices.
4. Go to one end of room and stand back-to-back.
5. Listen for unattended lockers again.
6. Search the roomness in 4 steps:
  - Chair to wall
  - Wall to chair
  - Chair to ceiling
  - Ceiling and above table settings
7. When completed with roomness, place an "X" on the door with partner's tag.
8. Observe side of "X" place date, time, and searcher's name.
9. Return search areas and repeat search.
10. Search team places their date, time, and searcher's names on the other half of "X".

**IF A SUSPICIOUS ITEM IS FOUND**

1. DO NOT MOVE OR DISTURB ITEM.
2. DO NOT USE HANDS OR CELLULAR PHONES!
3. Do not remove it to the only phone.
4. Do not place the item in water.
5. Do not cover the item.
6. Do not continue any more searching.
7. Evacuate the area based on recommendations.
8. Report the location and description of the object to the Charge Officer/Commander by using the phone.
9. Lockers that are unlocked in the area do you found them **DO NOT OPEN OR CLOSE.**
10. Monitor all of the suspicious location until you go to assignment.
11. Do not permit on entry into the area until the device has been removed or you are informed of duty.

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**Suspicious or Unattended?**

OFFICE FOR BOMBING PREVENTION

Criminals or terrorists sometimes conceal improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in backpacks, suitcases, or common items. Use the process to safely determine if an item is a serious threat or just unattended.

Is it **HOT**?

Hidden	Obviously suspicious	not Typical
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headed off to light</li> <li>• Appears nervous</li> <li>• Unattended</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intentionally into public areas</li> <li>• Seals the compartments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not close by</li> <li>• No labels</li> <li>• Personally marked</li> <li>• A single</li> </ul>

Use R.A.I.N. **YES** **NO**

**YES** (Hidden):  
 • Treat with caution  
 • Try to determine the owner  
 • Report to an authority

**NO** (Not Typical):  
 • Treat with caution  
 • Report to an authority

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**If an item is suspicious you should:**

**R** **Recognize the Indicators of a Suspected Explosive Device**  
Indicators can be related to the characteristics, events, location, or time, including whether the item is hidden, obviously suspicious, or not typical (HOT).

**A** **Avoid the Area**  
Don't touch the suspected item. Instead, immediately move and direct others to move away immediately.

**I** **Isolate the Suspected Item**  
Establish a perimeter to secure the area and continue to direct people away. Use frontal and overhead cover and if available wear personal protective equipment.

**N** **Notify Appropriate Emergency Services**  
Describe the Suspicious items and persons, the person's Actions, the Location of the item, the Time of placement and discovery, and Your actions to mitigate risk (SALTY).

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**BOMB THREAT STAND-OFF CARD**

Threat Description	Explosives Capacity	Mandatory Evacuation Distance	Shelter-in-Place Zone	Preferred Evacuation Distance
Pipe Bomb	5 lbs	70 ft	71-1199 ft	+1200 ft
Outside Bomber	20 lbs	110 ft	111-1999 ft	+1700 ft
Briefcase/Suitcase	50 lbs	150 ft	151-1849 ft	+1850 ft
Car	500 lbs	320 ft	321-1899 ft	+1900 ft
SUV/Van	1,000 lbs	400 ft	401-2399 ft	+2400 ft
Small Delivery Truck	4,000 lbs	640 ft	641-3799 ft	+3800 ft
Container/Water Truck	10,000 lbs	860 ft	861-5099 ft	+5100 ft
Semi-Trailer	60,000 lbs	1570 ft	1571-9299 ft	+9300 ft

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**For Additional Information**

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