

Explosives, Bombs and Fireworks

Materials causing an instantaneous disruption of solid or liquid bodies releasing gas, heat or pressure and associated with loud noise when enough pressure, temperature, or shock is applied describes an explosive. The pyrotechnic display often used as an application for entertainment known as fireworks is discussed below after a brief discussion on explosives and bombs defined as explosive devices put together to explode under specified conditions..

Explosives and Bombs

When the explosion is the result of a criminal act, a very careful and methodical search of the scene will frequently reveal evidence indicating the type of explosive involved; further, the search may reveal fragments or parts of either the container, the fuse mechanism or a time delay device. The scene should be roped off, guarded, and all nonessential personnel evacuated from the area. The Laboratory, upon request, will assist the law enforcement agencies in properly processing the scene.

In those instances where suspected explosives or explosive devices are encountered, it is suggested that **no attempt be made to move or neutralize the explosive or device**. A local bomb squad or the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) should be contacted by telephone and assistance requested. In Wisconsin, ATF has two districts:

- The Eastern District in Milwaukee, (414) 727- 6170
- The Western District in Madison, (608) 441-5050

Because of the danger and complexity involved, no attempt is being made in this handbook to outline safe or recommended procedures to be followed in the handling or neutralizing of suspected explosive materials. The ATF or local bomb squad

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should be informed by telephone as to the nature, type, size, location, etc., of the suspected explosive substance, as well as any other pertinent information. This will then permit the ATF or local bomb squad to make preliminary recommendations regarding precautionary measures which can and should be taken. If explosives are encountered:

Do not attempt to neutralize or destroy explosives.

Do not turn on any electrical switches.

Do not walk or step in any liquid or suspected explosive material.

Do not smoke or use matches in area.

Do not move any objects.

If a suspected bomb or package foreign to the scene is encountered:

Do not move, turn over, or disturb package or suspected bomb.

Do not immerse in any liquid.

Do evacuate building and immediate area.

Do not pick up or handle any detonators or explosives.

Do not breathe any vapors which may be present.

Nitroglycerine may cause a very severe headache

DO NOT transport suspected explosive devices or bombs to the Laboratory.

CAUTION: Electric blasting caps may be detonated by police radio transmission or cellular phones.



Fig 34-1 Although the destruction caused by a bomb is great, the pieces of the device which survive are surprising. Investigators should be alert to the investigative leads such debris can provide.

Fireworks

The current law regulating the manufacture, possession, sale and use of fireworks is contained in Wisconsin Statutes §167.10. By definition, fireworks means anything manufactured, processed or packaged for exploding, emitting sparks or combustion, which does not have another common use. Certain devices are specifically excluded from regulation as fireworks, unless controlled locally by city, village or town ordinance. A list of excluded (non-permit) devices is contained in Wisconsin Statutes §167.10. All other devices require a permit for their possession and use.

Notes