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## UNIVERSITY BOMB THREAT POLICY

### PURPOSE

Westfield State University is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for its students, faculty, staff, and guests. Since bomb threats pose a serious risk to life and property, all necessary precautions will be taken to increase awareness of the risks and campus procedures involved in bomb threats. The goal of this policy is to prevent loss of life and damage to University property.

### POLICY

1. Bomb threats are delivered in a variety of ways. Most threats are called into the target facility. Occasionally, calls are made through a third party. Sometimes a threat is communicated in writing, by a recording or by social media. Each threat is unique and will be treated as genuine. The University will **never ignore** a bomb threat.
2. The President has delegated the authority to handle all bomb threats, bombings, and criminal acts arising from those incidents at Westfield State University to the Director of Public Safety and the Department of Public Safety. The Department of Public Safety has responsibility for implementing the University Bomb Threat Procedure.
3. The Department of Public Safety will have the responsibility for responding to the threatened building, evaluating the threat, notifying occupants of the threat coordinating the search of the building with the assistance of the building's staff according to the procedures described in this policy, ensuring the security of the threatened building, ensuring notification of outside agencies, and evacuating the building, if necessary, according to the procedure described in this policy.
4. State and Federal jurisdictional responsibility for bomb removals, threats, and actual bombings are as follows:
  - a. Bomb removal is under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts State Police (MSP).
  - b. Bomb threats are under the jurisdiction of the Federal Bureau of

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Investigation (FBI).

- c. Actual bombings are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Treasury's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF).
5. The Director of Public Safety has the authority to request outside assistance for any bomb threat whenever the Director or his/her designee deems the assistance necessary. The Director will advise the President, and other key administrators as deemed appropriate, of bomb threat incidents. Once a decision is made by the Department of Public Safety to evacuate a threatened building, all persons including University faculty, staff, students, and visitors must immediately leave the facility. Never pull the fire alarm unless there is a fire. Other means will be used to communicate the evacuation such as using the building PA system, if available, utilizing the emergency notification (RAVE) system or conducting room-to-room contact.

## PROCEDURE

If a bomb threat is received, Public Safety will conduct a threat assessment to determine whether the threat is credible.

A threat assessment is the most important step when responding to a bomb threat. It will determine what other actions to take including the level of Public Safety response, the scope of the search, whether or not to evacuate the building(s) or the entire University.

Each incident is unique and all circumstances must be evaluated by Public Safety and/or the University Emergency Response Team. All threats must be carefully evaluated.

1. The University bomb threat procedure provides two alternatives for the Director of Public Safety and personnel:
  - a. Search the building without an evacuation, and evacuate if deemed necessary.
  - b. Evacuate the building immediately and simultaneously conduct a thorough search.
2. When an evacuation is initiated:

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- a. Never pull the fire alarm unless there is a fire. Other means will be used to communicate the evacuation such as using the building PA system, the emergency notification (RAVE) system, or conducting room-to-room contact.
  - b. Students, faculty, staff and guests will be directed to a safe area or facility on or off campus.
3. In order to deal with bomb threats, the University has established specific procedures to handle special events and functions.
- a. Residence Hall (and appurtenant structures, including Scanlon Banquet Hall and conference and multipurpose rooms): Each resident hall will be notified of the threat. Students will be asked to examine their rooms to locate any object that does not belong there. The residential life hall professional staff will help in the search of the building. If it is determined that evacuation is necessary, students will be notified by using the building PA system, the emergency notification (RAVE) system or conducting room-to-room contact. Students in the residence halls will receive annual training along with fire alarm drills to assist them in understanding these bomb threat response procedures.
  - b. Students will be directed to other suitable University buildings as the weather dictates. The Department of Public Safety will consult with their Residence Hall Director on duty and the Westfield Fire Department to decide when to re-occupy a residence hall. The Department of Public Safety will notify the Director of Residential Life and the Vice President of Student Affairs.
  - c. Academic Buildings: The Westfield Fire Department and Westfield Police Department will be notified by Public Safety of the threat and asked to respond to the University. The Director of Public Safety or his/her designee will determine whether to evacuate an academic building. Building activities will be diverted to other campus buildings. A search will be conducted with the assistance of that building's staff. When necessary, the Director will consult with the Vice President of Academic Affairs or his/her designee.
  - d. Other University Buildings and Property: The Director of Public Safety or his/her designee will make the decision about the need

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for evacuation. The Westfield Fire Department and Westfield Police Department will be notified, and Public Safety will conduct a search of the building with that building's staff if time allows.

e. Special Events and Functions:

- i. The threat assessment may dictate that the University notifies all attendees at a special event in the University buildings or facilities of any bomb threats received. Notification of the threat will be made by a public announcement. The Westfield Fire Department and Westfield Police Department will be notified. Public Safety will conduct a search of the building with that building's staff if time allows. The decision to evacuate will be made by the Director of Public Safety or his/her designee. The event sponsors will be kept as informed as possible about the situation.
  - ii. In cases where the bomb threat is directed at a specific activity in a residence hall, for example, a dance, the Public Safety Director or his/her designee has the authority to determine the need for evacuation at that event or activity. The Public Safety Supervisor or Officer in Charge the event's sponsor along with the Residence Hall Director on duty will consult, if time allows, about possible alternatives to evacuation. All attendees will be notified of the threat (by making an announcement or other method), then a search will be conducted if time allows.
4. In the event that a suspected bomb or incendiary device is discovered, the building or area will be evacuated immediately by using the building PA system or conducting room-to-room contact. No University personnel or anyone else shall touch the suspected bomb or incendiary device. The Massachusetts State Police will be contacted by the Department of Public Safety and a request will be made to have the State Police Bomb Squad respond. The Westfield Fire Department and Westfield Police Department will also be notified to provide immediate assistance to Public Safety. The Department of Public Safety will have control of the building or area if a suspected bomb or incendiary device is discovered. In the event of an explosion/fire, the Fire Department shall assume control of the situation/scene and all actions will be guided by their policies and procedures.

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5. The Director of Public Safety will be given every assistance needed by the University personnel, and is authorized to use any area of the University for a remote command post in any bomb threat/bombing situation.

## **REVIEW**

This policy shall be reviewed annually by the Director of Public Safety and the Vice President for Student Affairs.