



# PA TURNPIKE COMMISSION POLICY

*This is a statement of official Pennsylvania Turnpike Policy*

**NUMBER:** 5.08

**APPROVAL DATE:** 06-18-2002

**POLICY SUBJECT:**

Terroristic Threats

**RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT:**

Traffic Engineering and Operations

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 07-02-2002

**REVISED DATE:** 03-16-2021

**A. PURPOSE:**

This policy letter establishes guidelines on preparing for, responding to, and reporting of bomb threats, threats of violence, and suspicious activities or devices.

**B. SCOPE:**

Applies to departments and employees under the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission’s jurisdiction on Commission owned and leased buildings and worksites.

**C. GENERAL POLICY:**

It is our policy to take any threats to Commission owned or leased buildings, structures, worksites, and staff very seriously. This policy establishes the role and responsibilities of the appropriate personnel and provides procedures for ensuring rapid response through review of any threatening situation.

**D. DEFINITIONS:**

Terroristic Threat: For purposes of this policy letter, the term “terroristic threat” is defined as “a violent act or an act dangerous to human life, in violation of the criminal laws of the United States, or of any state, to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.

Homeland Security Threats (outside the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission) are addressed in the response guidelines for Homeland Security Alert System.

**E. PROCEDURES:**

Applies to all Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission facilities.

**Reporting Terroristic Threats, Bomb Threats, Suspicious Activity, or Unusual Situations:**

In the event of an emergency or terroristic threat all employees of the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission should call 9-1-1. This includes receipt of a terroristic threat, finding a suspicious

object/package or observing suspicious activity or unusual situations. The Operations Center will be conferenced or notified by the County 911 center. Any Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission facility may contact the Operations Center, if needed, by calling the Emergency 800 number, 1-800-932-0586. The nature and scope of a terroristic threat will be evaluated by the Pennsylvania State Police, Troop T.

**Telephone Threats:**

Any Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission office or facility is a potential target for a terroristic threat. A terroristic threat can be delivered in a variety of ways. However, most threats are received by telephone. A Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission Terroristic Threat Data Card, should be maintained by all telephones and completed in case of a telephoned terroristic threat. The cards can be obtained from the Central Office Stock Room through normal ordering procedures. If a terroristic threat is received, the steps outlined below are to be followed:

1. Record the exact time you received the call.
2. Concentrate on what the caller is saying, anything may be important. Try to keep the caller talking to obtain as much information as possible and especially the following:
  - a. Type of threat
  - b. Placation of threat
  - c. Time of threat occurrence
  - d. Description of threat
  - e. Type and quantity of explosive, agent, device, etc.
  - f. Who placed the threat?
3. Pay particular attention to:
  - a. Background noises
  - b. Voice of caller, accent, speech pattern, sex, age
  - c. Is the voice familiar?
  - d. If a bomb threat is received by e-mail or regular mail, do not delete the e-mail.
4. Notify your supervisor or, if your supervisor is not immediately available, notify another person in charge.
5. The manager/supervisor in charge will immediately contact the Operations Center with the location of the terroristic threat or related incident. The person who received the actual terroristic threat should be available for questioning by the Pennsylvania State Police. In the absence of Pennsylvania State Police, the Incident Commander should exercise his/her discretion in determining if evacuation is warranted. The Incident Commander should provide the Pennsylvania State Police with knowledge of significant building issues, such as the location of employees with disabilities that have an impact on evacuation.
6. Evacuation:

The decision to evacuate a building in response to a terroristic threat will be based on a number of variables and will be the responsibility of the Manager/Supervisor in charge, Executive Staff. Immediate evacuation will not always occur. In situations where the building is not evacuated,

an emergency search team will search the exterior and interior of the building with assistance from the Manager/Supervisor in charge.

a. If it is determined that a building is to be evacuated:

1. All employees and visitors should be instructed to clear the building according to a prearranged plan, usually the fire evacuation plan. Since in most buildings, employees will be evacuated by the use of their fire alarms, employees may not know that the evacuation is due to a terroristic threat.
2. Elevators are not to be used.
3. Employees are to be instructed to take notice of the areas as they are evacuating, identifying the location of anything suspicious to the manager/supervisor in charge.
4. Desks, cabinets, and storage rooms should be unlocked except for confidential information that must be secured.
5. Lights should be left on but all PC's and other electrical equipment and appliances in your work area should be shut down provided sufficient time exists for safe evacuation.
6. Each person should remove his or her own personal belongings, such as vehicle keys, personal identification, handbags, lunch boxes, briefcases, and other personal containers or property from an evacuated area but should not touch any other property.
7. All employees and visitors are to be kept out of the area. Access to evacuated areas should be restricted to Pennsylvania State Police, fire, and other personnel designated by the person(s) in charge. Additionally, no one is to be permitted within at least 500 feet of an evacuated area except authorized personnel.
8. When a building has been evacuated, employees are not to return to the building until all employees are permitted to return.

7. Searches

- a. Before an evacuation decision is made, employees may be requested to scan their immediate work area for suspicious objects or items that do not fit their location. This procedure should be followed in all building evacuations because the reason for the evacuation may not be known until employees have left the building. The manager/supervisor, coordinator, or other designated staff may be requested to scan public access areas, such as the restrooms, snack bars, and reception areas.
- b. If a decision is made to evacuate the building, employees are to take note of the areas they pass through and report to the manager/supervisor in charge any unusual packages, equipment, or individuals. The manager/supervisor in charge of designated areas are to quickly check public access areas or other areas where employees are not located before they evacuate unless they are told to immediately leave the building.

- c. In all cases, employees are not to touch, open, or attempt to move any suspicious object.
- d. Employees are not to use portable radios, cellular telephones, cordless telephones, or any device that transmits a radio frequency (RF) pulse, except to communicate critical emergency information to key officials.
- e. If a suspicious object is identified, the manager/supervisor in charge is to be informed and he or she will notify the Pennsylvania State Police of the exact location of the item so that appropriate action can be taken by bomb squad or explosive ordinance disposal (EOD) personnel.

8. Explosions or Other Incidents:

- a. In the event of a suspected, threatened, or actual explosion or other incident in or near a Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission facility, a supervisor/manager or person in charge will ensure that Operations Center, police, fire, and emergency personnel are immediately notified.
- b. The facility should be evacuated in a manner that keeps employees away from the area affected by the blast/act.
- c. Explosions can be caused by overloaded electrical transformers, gas line leaks, etc. However, it can take time to determine the actual cause of an explosion.
- d. Employees should be given basic information regarding precautions to take to keep them alert for the possibility of other explosive devices or hazards in the area as they are evacuating.

9. Written Threats, Mail Threats, Suspicious Objects:

- a. If a written threat is received, it must be handled with care. No one, other than the person receiving it, should touch the document. If a written threat is received by e-mail, do not delete the e-mail. The employee should immediately notify his or her supervisor if available or other management personnel who should call the Operations Center. The computer should remain as is, do not delete, forward, etc. The Operations Center will then notify the Pennsylvania State Police. The Pennsylvania State Police will interview the person receiving the threat and the supervisor/manager in charge and determine the appropriate response. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD ANY THREAT BE IGNORED.
- b. If an employee finds a suspicious object that he or she believes may be harmful, the employee should immediately notify his or her supervisor if available, or other management personnel who should contact the Operations Center, who will then notify the Pennsylvania State Police. No one should touch the object. The Pennsylvania State Police will assess the situation and determine the proper response.
- c. If an employee observes a suspicious activity or an unusual situation, or hears, sees, or receives communications that may be evidence of a threat or pending threat, the employee should immediately notify his or her supervisor if available, or other

management personnel who would call the Operations Center, who will then notify the Pennsylvania State Police. The Pennsylvania State Police will interview the person who originally notified his or her supervisor. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD ANY SERIOUS REPORT BE IGNORED.

10. Office Closings:

- a. If a decision is made by Commission management after consultation with the Pennsylvania State Police and emergency authorities not to permit employees to return to the building for reason of life/safety, the department in charge of the facility should be notified.
- b. If offices remain open, supervisors should be flexible in permitting employees to use annual or personal leave if they do not want to return to the building.

11. Training/Education:

- a. Training and/or education on responding to threats, and other related incidents is mandatory for all Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission employees. Training/education should be available on an ongoing basis and recorded in accordance with the policy/procedure.
- b. Employees who regularly open mail or receive packages should be provided specific training on how to recognize suspicious letters or packages. The Pennsylvania State Police can provide this training as well as the United States Postal Inspection Service.

Due to recent circumstances, we feel it is in the best interest for all employees to be informed of how to deal with suspicious packages and letters to protect not only yourself, but your coworkers.

Specific procedures which address the handling of suspicious packages and letters for employees and supervisors are available in the Operations Center. Also available is an advisory flyer with reminder information and an informational flyer from the Centers for Disease Control which may be posted and distributed in your work area.

If you have any concerns or questions, please contact the Occupational Safety and Insurance Supervisor.

Also see the Workplace Violence Policy #3.7.

*This Policy Letter supersedes all previous Policy Letters on this subject.*