

How to Respond to Threatening Calls

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are [available in Spanish at www.gemplers.com](http://www.gemplers.com).

KEY POINTS:

- Stay calm if you receive a threatening call.
- Never argue with a threatening caller.
- Ask specific questions if you receive a bomb threat.
- Know where we post emergency numbers and don't hesitate to call for outside emergency help.

Note to trainer: Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold.



Take threatening calls seriously

- Many of you have likely heard the term “workplace violence” – a situation where someone becomes violent at work.
- Sometimes, people exhibiting irrational behavior make threats over the phone.
- These threats may include:
 - threats to harm you, your family or your co-workers;
 - threats of suicide; or
 - threats to destroy property – such as by planting a bomb or setting a building on fire
- Often, the people making these threats don't follow through.
- It's also clear they also may need counseling or other professional help.
- While it's not our job to solve a threatening caller's problems, it is important that we take threatening calls seriously – and know how to respond.



Stay calm

- How you react to a telephone caller's threats can make a big difference.
- The most important reaction is to stay calm.
- Arguing with a threatening caller or panicking will only make the situation worse.
- If you get a threatening call, immediately report it to your supervisor, our safety director or another manager.
- We also encourage you to call for outside emergency help if you ever think your life or the lives of others are in danger.



Note to trainer: Tell trainees how to call for professional emergency help. Be sure 911 or other emergency phone numbers are posted by all telephones, and that your employees know how to reach a manager at all times. Also, be sure your local emergency services agencies (police/sheriff, fire department and emergency medical services) have blueprints and/or a layout of your operation.

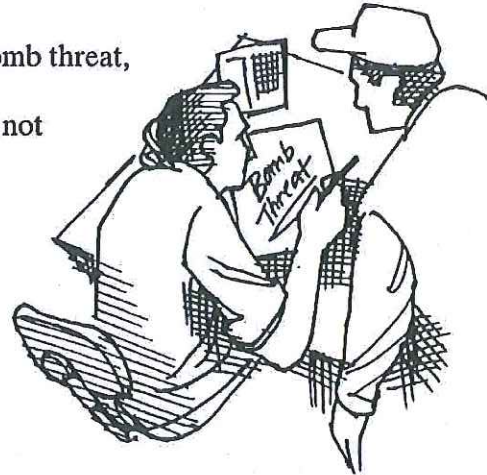
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Responding to a bomb threat

- While you may think it's unlikely we would ever receive a bomb threat, bomb threats to businesses do occur.
- Statistics show that in the vast majority of cases, bombs have not been planted.
- Yet it's important to know what to do if you do receive a telephoned bomb threat. Here are a few tips:
 - Stay calm, and maintain a positive, friendly voice.
 - Keep the caller on the line as long as possible.
 - Express concern about injury and loss of life. Mention that many people here have children, and that the children need their parents alive.
 - Write down the exact time the call came in, and exactly what the caller said.
 - Note what the person's voice sounded like, and if it sounded familiar.
 - Pay attention to any background noises, and to any unusual words or phrases.
 - Ask the caller when the bomb is going to explode, where it is, what it looks like, and whether the caller placed the bomb.
 - If possible, quietly signal a responsible co-worker to get help while the caller is still on the line. One way to do that is to write "bomb threat" on a piece of paper for a nearby co-worker to see.



Note to trainer: It's strongly suggested that you contact your local law enforcement agency if a bomb threat is received since it is a crime in most jurisdictions. Let trainees know who in your operation should immediately be notified of a bomb threat. Also let them know whether you keep a Bomb Threat Call Checklist by telephones.

A few more tips

- Stay in control. Carefully listen to what a threatening caller is saying.
- Don't make fun of a threatening caller or engage in personal attacks.
- Be polite. Don't raise your voice.
- When necessary, call for outside emergency help.



Never argue with a threatening caller.

Are there any questions?

Note to trainer: Take time to answer trainees' questions. Then review the Threatening Phone Call Do's and Don'ts.

THREATENING PHONE CALL DO'S AND DON'TS

DO:

- Take all threatening calls seriously.
- Know our street address and location in case you need to call 911 or other outside emergency help.
- Be sure the local police or sheriff is notified in the case of a bomb threat.

DON'T:

- Raise your voice or argue with a threatening caller.
- Hang up on a caller making a bomb threat.
- Hesitate to report any type of a threatening call to your supervisor or another manager.

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