

## Explosives, Bombs and Fireworks

### I. Explosives and Bombs

**W**hen 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 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:

- A. Do not** attempt to neutralize or destroy explosives.
- B. Do not** turn on any electrical switches.
- C. Do not** walk or step in any liquid or suspected explosive material.
- D. Do not** smoke or use matches in area.
- E. Do not** move any objects.

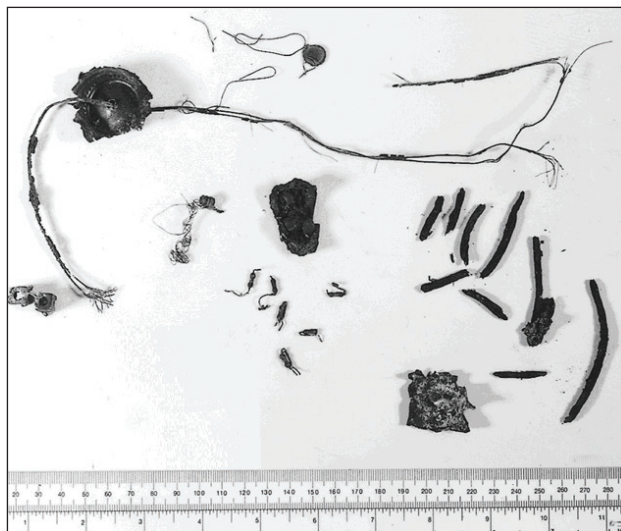
If a suspected bomb or package foreign to the scene is encountered:

- A. Do not** move, turn over, or disturb package or suspected bomb.
- B. Do not** immerse in any liquid.
- C. Evacuate** building and immediate area.
- D. Do not** pick up or handle any detonators or explosives.
- E. Do not** breathe any vapors which may be present. Nitroglycerine may cause a very severe headache.
- F. 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 32-1**

*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.*



## II. 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. **The Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory DOES NOT accept fireworks as evidence or for destruction.**