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omb Threats

Bomb attacks on the workplace are rare but the English experience during the conflicts with the IRA still resonates with many. However there are still plenty of hoax calls threatening mayhem even though the real threat of a bomb is very low for most organisations. Facility managers and their teams should be prepared for dealing with such events.

A Bomb Threat Procedure and checklist should be part of the safety management system along with fire and evacuation procedures. All employees who could conceivably receive a bomb threat should be trained as part of induction or refresher training on fire and evacuation so that it becomes part of the normal safety routine.

Switchboard operators, receptionists or anyone who might answer a publicly published telephone number must have ready access to the Bomb Threat Checklist. They must be trained to understand their important role in recording and communicating the bomb threat and must be routinely familiar with the procedures and rehearse them regularly.

A clear and accessible list of actions to take on receipt of a call should be displayed on appropriate walls or desks so that staff can see it instantly. Advice on developing such lists can be obtained from the local police Counter Terrorist Security Advisor. Other staff mentioned in the action list, particularly security staff, must be made aware of their roles and the importance of them or their deputies always being contactable.

All affected staff, including night or temporary staff, must be familiarised with any recording, redial or display facilities involved, and know how to contact police and security staff in or out of hours. Bomb threat procedures should be rehearsed as part of regular evacuation procedure exercises.

Detailed advice on handling bomb threats and a sample checklist are available from the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure at www.cpni.gov.uk/SecurityPlanning/bombThreats.aspx