

SAN FRANCISCO FIRE DEPARTMENT - HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TEAM

Standard Operating Procedure: EXPLOSIVES

DEFINITION

An explosive is any chemical compound, mixture, or device, the primary or common purpose of which is to function by explosion, which will occur with an instantaneous release of gas and heat (Rockets, grenades, bombs, flashpowders, propellant explosives, small arms ammunition, and common fireworks.)

A blasting agent is any material designed for blasting that has been tested and has been found to be so insensitive that there is little probability of accidental initiation to explosion. (Mixture of ammonium nitrate and fuel oil.)

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Identify the material(s) involved.
2. Keep non-essential people away. (This includes non-essential emergency service personnel.)
3. Establish control zones. (Isolate area and deny entry.)
4. Extinguish all sources of ignition in the vicinity. Do not allow vehicles or other sources of ignition in the area.
5. Wear positive pressure SCBA and full protective clothing.
6. Avoid exposure to smoke, fumes, vapors, dust, or direct contact. The products of combustion of some propellant explosives are poisonous.
7. Do not allow personnel to touch or move explosives. Explosives should be moved only under the advice and supervision of trained explosive personnel.
8. Contact local police bomb units or nearest military explosives team for assistance.

S.F.P.D. Bomb Disposal Unit
Presidio Military E.O.D.

9. When the Hazardous Materials Team (HMT) is requested to respond to a bomb threat involving hazardous materials, under no circumstances will the HMT conduct building or area searches even when hazardous materials are involved. The HMT will stage in a safe area, but in no case less than 600 feet from the incident scene. The HMT will act as a technical resource for the bomb squad. This may involve the loaning of chemical protective clothing to bomb squad personnel, assistance in dressing, researching chemical data, etc..

FIRE CONDITIONS

1. **DO NOT FIGHT FIRE IN CARGO OR STORAGE AREAS CONTAINING EXPLOSIVES.** Withdraw from the area and let the fire burn.
2. If a fire is near explosives, efforts should be made to prevent the fire from reaching the explosives. For fires involving the motor, cab, or tires of vehicles transporting explosives, flood the involved area with water.
3. The application of water to burning Class A or Class B explosives may cause an explosion.
4. **EVACUATE AREA:**
 - Class A Explosives - 1/2 mile in all directions
 - Class B Explosives - 1/2 mile in all directions
 - Class C Explosives - 1500 feet in all directions
 - Blasting Agents - 1/2 mile in all directions
5. Do not overhaul areas where explosives have burned or exploded.
6. Explosives that have been exposed to heat may be very shock sensitive. Keep all personnel away and do not move these containers.
7. When explosives are involved in fire or serious accidents on the railroad, the Bureau of Explosives should be notified.