

# Executive Summary - Bomb Incidents in Schools:

## An Analysis of 2015-2016 School Year October 2015 – January 2016 Edition

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### Overview and Summary –

This school year, school safety news has been overwhelmingly dominated by reports of bomb threats. At the Educator's School Safety Network, we think it is critical to move beyond mere speculation on this issue to an analysis of actual facts and data. The Educator's School Safety Network (ESSN), a national non-profit school safety organization, has compiled the most current information on bomb incidents in America's schools to determine the scope and severity of the bomb incident problem.

Based on our analysis of bomb threat data and trends, the sobering reality is that **an explosive device WILL be detonated in an American school, and we must be ready**. The question that must be considered is not "if" an explosive device will be detonated in a school but rather "when".

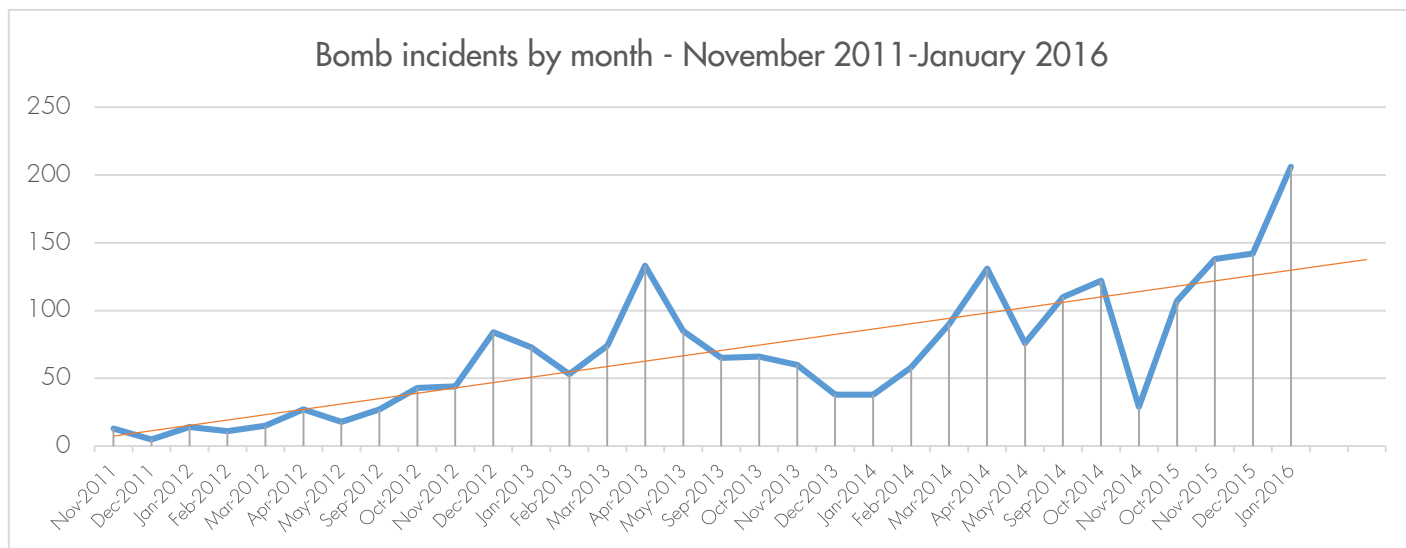
Concurrent with these troubling findings, school administrators and law enforcement officials find themselves making critical decisions about bomb threat incidents with **few established best practices, outdated protocols, and a complete lack of education-based training**. More significantly, many school leaders do not understand the potentially catastrophic effects of a bomb incident or do not have the requisite skills to respond appropriately and effectively.

The full report has two important purposes:

1. To provide the educational and law enforcement communities with the most current data and analysis available on the rate, frequency, severity, scope, and nature of bomb incidents in the United States.
2. To provide school and law enforcement responders with an overview and understanding of the critical trends and warning signs that have emerged from our analysis of recent incidents.

### Summary of Findings

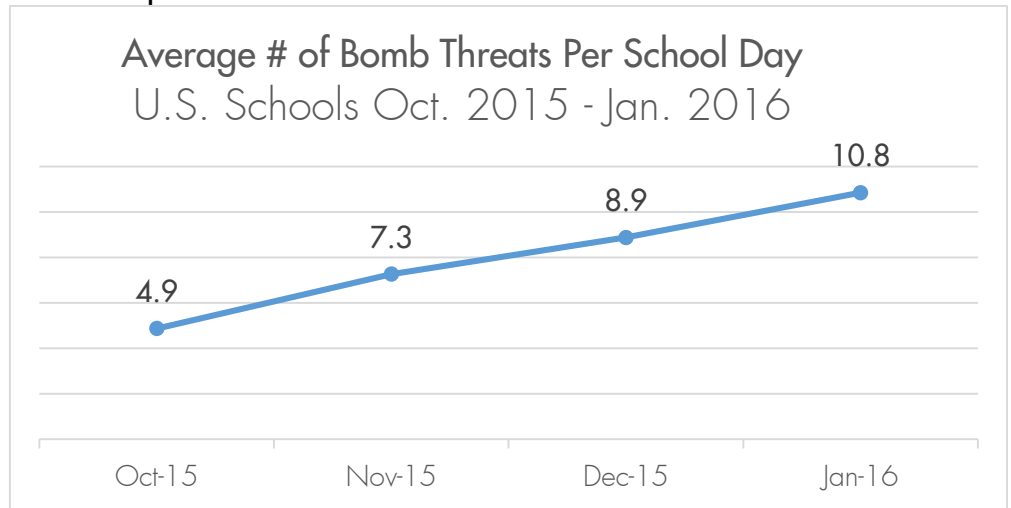
#### Is There an Increase in the Number of Bomb Threats?



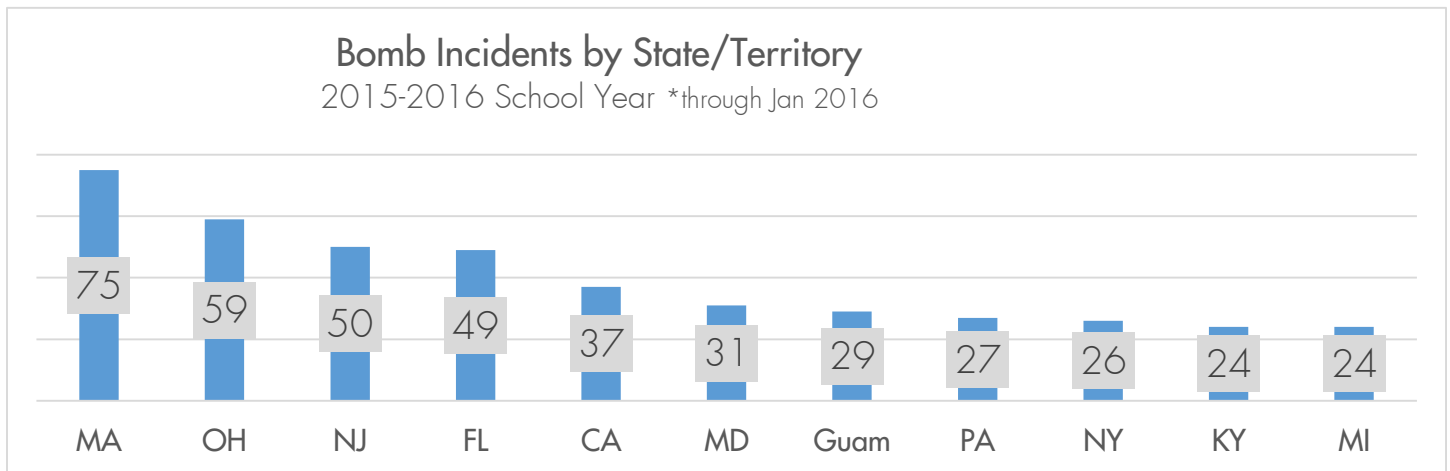
The most significant result of the report is the dramatic increase in school-based bomb threat incidents specifically during the 2015-2016 academic year. While incidents have been gradually increasing since 2012, **so far this school year U.S. schools have experienced 745 bomb threats, an increase of 143% compared to that same time period in 2012-2013.**

### How Many Bomb Threats Have Been Reported?

While there is clearly an increase in threats, rapid growth has occurred in the last four months. January of 2016 saw **206 school-based bomb threats, an average of more than 10 threats per school day- the highest number recorded to date.**



### Which States Have the Most Threats?



Since 2011, California and Ohio reported the most bomb threats. Widespread instances of automated calling threats on the east coast in December and January altered this dynamic with Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Maryland now experiencing bomb threats most frequently. **During the first half of the 2015-2016 school year, bomb threats occurred in 48 of the 50 states.**

## Where Do Bomb Threats Occur?

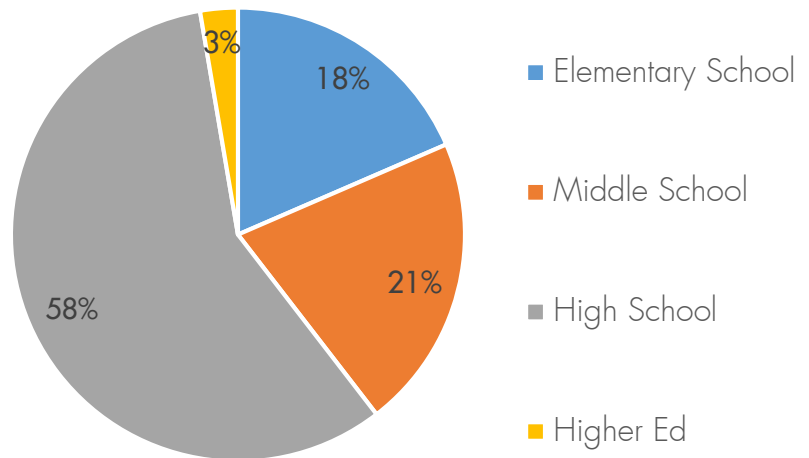
While 58% of this year's bomb threats have occurred in high schools, an almost equal number have taken place in settings with much younger students. **These "non-traditional" targets of bomb threats contain extremely vulnerable populations and are often ill-equipped and trained to deal with crisis events.**

In a secondary school setting, the perpetrator is often found to be a student who desires a disruption or notoriety. At the elementary level, the perpetrator is most often someone from the outside whose purposes are much more obscured – and potentially much more deadly.

## Where do Bomb Incidents Occur?

2015-2016 School Year

\*through Jan 2016

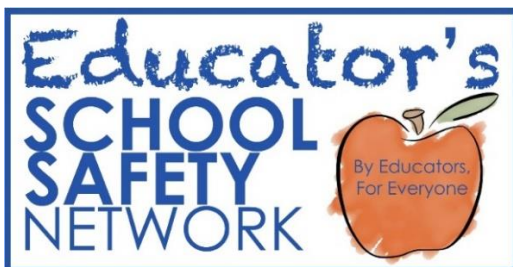


## Recommendations

School administrators need to develop the critical skills necessary to prepare, prevent, and respond to bomb incidents. All building and district administrators should:

- Have a functional understanding of explosive devices, sheltering distances, and the disruptive/destructive capabilities of explosive devices
- Have an understanding of the protocols and practices that will be employed by emergency responders
- Be able to appropriately assess the level and validity of threats and identify pre-attack indicators
- Have protocols in place to prevent future bomb threats and diminish copycat incidents

It is critical for educators and emergency responders to be equally involved in training, prevention, and response as it pertains to violence in schools – particularly in terms of bomb-related incidents. Educators must secure a prominent "seat at the table" and be active, equal partners in preventing and responding to bomb threat incidents.



For additional information and training opportunities, go to:

[www.eSchoolSafety.org](http://www.eSchoolSafety.org)

For the complete report, go to: [www.eSchoolSafety.org/bir-2016/](http://www.eSchoolSafety.org/bir-2016/)

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