I. INTRODUCTION (Purpose and Intent)

The vast majority of bomb threats made against the University of South Florida System (USF System) buildings and activities are false and intended to disrupt the normal activities scheduled at the facility. However, one cannot assume that the caller does not have definite knowledge of an explosive device and is sincere in his/her desire to minimize personal injury. This policy outlines the legal definitions and penalties and USF System processes relating to bomb threats.

II. STATEMENT OF POLICY

Section 790.164, Florida Statutes - False reports of bombing state-owned property, etc., felony; penalty; reward; states in part:

It shall be unlawful for any person to make a false report with the intent to deceive, mislead, or otherwise misinform any person, concerning the placing or planting of any bomb, dynamite, or deadly explosive, or concerning any act of arson or other violence to property owned by the State. Any person violating the provisions of this subsection shall be guilty of a felony of the second degree, punishable as provided in Sections 775.082, 775.083 or 775.084, Florida Statutes.

There shall be a $5,000 reward for the giving of information to any law enforcement agency in the State, which information leads to the arrest and conviction of any person violating the provisions of this section. Any person claiming such reward shall apply to the law enforcement agency developing the case and be paid by the Department of Law Enforcement from the deficiency fund.

III. THE FOLLOWING PROCESSES ARE TO BE FOLLOWED to effectively manage situations relating to bomb threats so as to minimize the potential for life or property loss.
For the purpose of this policy, Police means the local law enforcement agency with jurisdictional authority.

A. **Receipt of Threat**

Bomb Threat called directly to a USF System Building or USF System Switchboard.

1. Responsibility of the person receiving the call:

   a. The most important single factor to keep in mind upon receipt of a bomb threat is to remain calm—the information gathered at this point is absolutely essential.

   b. Complete the checklist for bomb threats. *(Attachment A)* Retain a copy, as it will be used by the Police for their investigation.

   c. Immediately after the caller hangs up, the person receiving the call should call the Police by dialing 911 and they should report this information to their supervisor. The supervisor should, at this point, inform the appropriate authority (Dean, Chairperson, Director). The Chief of Police or the Senior Security official of the separately accredited institutions or regional campus will notify the USF Emergency Operations Manager.

2. These procedures should be followed **immediately**, as any delay would only serve to increase the risk factor.

B. **Bomb Threat Received in Writing**

Upon receipt of a bomb threat in writing, immediately call the Police by dialing 911. You will be instructed at that time what steps to take. Do not handle any physical items connected with the threat more than necessary.

C. **Threat Evaluation**

Unfortunately, there is little reliable information to assist in differentiating between a bomb hoax and legitimate warning.

As the primary responsibility and authority for handling bomb threats rests with the Police, the following guidelines will be in effect:

1. The Police shall immediately gather and evaluate all available facts and information to determine the most reasonable course of action to be followed.
In arriving at this decision the Police will meet with the administrative official in charge of the building to discuss the need for evacuation of the building.

2. If, in the opinion of the administrative official in charge of the building, an evacuation is necessary, such action will be implemented immediately.

3. The USF Emergency Operations Manager must be notified immediately of any building or campus evacuation.

4. If Police have information or knowledge which might substantiate the threat, immediate evacuation shall be required. This decision will be final.

5. In all cases where total evacuation is NOT ordered, the Police shall immediately communicate this decision, for review and concurrence, to the Vice President for Administrative Services or the Regional Chancellor or appropriate designee of each campus.

**D. Evacuation**

1. If the recommendation is to evacuate the threatened building, all occupants will be told to immediately leave the building.

   a. Evacuation of the building will proceed from the outside-in and from the bottom-up in order to permit the orderly evacuation of all persons in a timely manner.

   b. All occupants will be advised, prior to leaving, to look for any unusual or suspicious objects, activities or persons and report it to the Police.

   c. Personal possessions such as attaché cases, purses, or other handbags should be removed by the owner when departing the building.

   d. Persons evacuating from a building should refer to the “Bomb Threat Stand-Off Chart” (Attachment B) for a determination of a safe evacuation distance and should not reenter until an approved reentry announcement is made.

2. If the recommendation is not to evacuate the threatened building, the following shall apply:

   a. The administrative official in charge of the building, or his/her designee, shall immediately notify or cause to be notified, all building occupants of
the receipt of the threat and offer an opportunity for each individual to make a decision as to remaining or leaving the building.

b. All occupants will make a visual inspection of their rooms and will immediately notify the Police of any unusual, suspicious or unidentifiable object. Any such object being located will cause a reevaluation of the need for mandatory evacuation.

c. The Police will search the exterior of the building, the basement, stairwells, elevator shafts, closets, restrooms, and all areas readily accessible to the public.

E. The Search

1. The search will be coordinated by the Police on scene in accordance with their department’s policies. Cooperation between the Police Officer on scene and the facility personnel will serve to expedite the search.

2. The Police may ask facility personnel to assist in searching areas with which the personnel are most familiar.

3. It is imperative that facility personnel involved in the search be instructed that their job is only to assist the Police in searching for suspicious objects; they should NOT move, jar, or touch any suspicious object or anything attached thereto. If any suspicious object is found, the Police on scene should be contacted immediately.

4. The Police will determine when the building is to be reopened. After reentry, occupants of assigned areas should be alert for unusual objects and report immediately if such an item is found.

F. Reassignment of Space for Disrupted Classes

The campus academic space scheduling office will assist in every way possible in relocating classes which are evacuated because of a bomb threat.

*Current Responsible Office: Administrative Services

*Refer to the appropriate Responsible Office website for a current name of the Vice President or other Responsible Officer.