Questions to be answered prior to ordering a search include, “Will it be an overt search or a covert search?” and “Will it be conducted without evacuation, or after evacuation of the area to be searched?” Regardless of the extent of the evacuation, a search is almost always advisable. While circumstances of a partial or no evacuation will often necessitate a covert search, the conditions that usually enable an overt search to be conducted are those of a total evacuation. A covert search is conducted to avoid both panic and interruption of business operations and is generally conducted by a few supervisory or managerial personnel without arousing employee suspicions. By having individual employees search their own work areas, an overt search may be completed quickly and with a minimum of lost production time. However, it may be difficult to train employees in efficient, thorough bomb searches. Disgruntled employees have been known to place bombs, and in the search situations just mentioned, the bomber could also be among the searchers. The use of specially selected and trained teams greatly increases the efficiency of overt search operations.

Many of the issues regarding the search should be taken care of during the planning and preparation stage. They include the following:

- **Select search teams.** A practical and effective approach is to make the selection from among building personnel familiar with specific areas of the building. Floor area wardens may also be designated to direct specific floor or area searches and relay information to the control center. It is advisable to provide all evacuation and search team members with some sort of distinguishing marking which identifies them as emergency personnel.

- **Train search teams** in thorough search procedures, constantly emphasizing their role as searchers and not as bomb experts. Searchers should familiarize themselves with normal building sights and sounds in order to more quickly detect any unusual object or noise. Each searcher should have a flashlight, knife, standard & phillips screwdrivers, crescent wrench, probe, extension mirror, and tape, twine, chalk, or crepe paper to mark search areas. Ladders, bolt cutters, and pry bars should be available if needed. Although normal workloads and departmental policy may preclude the handling of bomb searches by public safety agencies, they may provide training assistance and offer advice on what sort of equipment is necessary for a bomb search.

- **Determine search sequence and procedures.** The usual search sequence is to start on the outside and work toward the inside. Once inside, start at the lowest level and work upward.

The order of the search sequence begins with a thorough search of outside areas (shrubs, structures, vehicles parked around the building, etc.), building entrances, lobbies and public areas (restrooms, stairways, elevators, elevator shafts, etc.). Due to their accessibility, these areas should be checked very carefully. Use special caution when checking doors for the presence of booby traps or antidisturbance switches. Once external and public areas have been cleared, the search of the inside begins in the basement or subbasement. When possible, searches of elevators, utility closets, and basement areas containing large machinery should at least be guided by maintenance personnel familiar with the facility.
If the lights are off when beginning a search, it may be advisable to leave them off. Search teams should have access to flashlights; battery operated lanterns, or other auxiliary lighting. Booby-trapped switches can be improvised for use in many seemingly innocent ways. For this reason, maps, rugs, drapes, pictures and light switches should not be disturbed without first determining whether a booby trap switch mechanism is involved. Once in the room, the searcher(s), with eyes shut, should listen quietly to identify and classify background noises as either usual or unusual. Once accustomed to normal building sounds, searchers will be more likely to notice out-of-place noises when searching a room.

Visual Search
Prior to a physical room search, a visual search should be made. With the room divided into areas of responsibility, give each searcher an equal number of places to search. Both the visual and physical searches should progress in stages: floor to waist, waist to eye-level, eye-level to ceiling, and under false or suspended ceilings. The physical search sequence starts at the sides of the room, and progresses toward the center. As a room or floor is cleared, chalk or tape can be used to indicate that the area has been searched. Upon checking various areas of assignment, it is a good idea to avoid saying no bomb was there. Instead, as each area is searched and cleared, a simple statement that no bomb was found should be sufficient.

The search sequences discussed in the preceding paragraphs generally enable searchers to check first those areas most likely to be used to hide an improvised explosive device (IED). In instances where this does not hold true, the sequences should be modified to allow such places to be checked early in the search. It is a good practice to search logical bomb targets before searching elsewhere. Logical targets would include a specific office or agency that has received threats or has been a target of bombers in the past, machinery essential to the operation of a particular business or businesses, etc.

Dogs trained to detect explosives are helpful in general building searches, and are very valuable when searching lockers, vehicles and other close quarter areas.

If a device or suspect device is located, DO NOT TOUCH IT and do not assume it to be the only one. Note its location, description, and proximity to utilities (gas lines, water pipes, and electrical panel). Relay this information to the Emergency Operation Center, then clear and secure the area. A discovery of this nature doesn’t end the search. Efforts must continue until the entire facility has been checked.

All search reports should be made to the Emergency Operations Center.

Fatigue
An aspect that should be dealt with during the planning and preparation phase is fatigue. Since a thorough search can be lengthy, searcher fatigue is an important consideration. Effective training will help lessen the effect of hours of tedious searching, but other measures to alleviate fatigue should be available. A map dividing the facility into distinct search areas should be prepared during the planning phase. By splitting the search effort and using a systematic approach, the most likely hiding places and the more difficult areas can be searched first while teams are freshest. If a prolonged search is unavoidable, search teams should be given break periods. Six hours is about the maximum time that teams can operate efficiently.

Re-entry
In the event that no bomb is found, the subsequent decision to re-enter will be influenced by the confidence in the search procedure.