



For Immediate Release

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**Friday, November 4, 2022
4:05 p.m., CDT**

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Suspicious Package Discovered- Temple Beth-El

The Birmingham Police Department is investigating a suspicious package discovered at the Temple Beth-El Synagogue (2179 Highland Avenue Birmingham, Alabama 35205). The incident occurred on Friday, November 4, 2022.

Incident:

At around 8:30 AM, the security director for the Jewish Federation Birmingham Division was notified of a suspicious package left near the Temple Beth-El Synagogue. The security director responded to the location and observed what appeared to be a backpack near the synagogue; he felt as though the backpack was suspicious. The security director notified the Birmingham Police Department (BPD) as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the synagogue was evacuated.

BPD bomb squad technicians and members of the BPD Tactical Operations Precinct responded to the location. FBI agents responded to the scene. BPD bomb squad technicians observed the backpack and determined the backpack as well as surrounding facts required precautions to be taken. Officers rerouted all vehicle and pedestrian traffic away from the area.

BPD bomb squad technicians brought in equipment used to transport items in this situation. BPD bomb squad technicians transported the suspicious package to an undisclosed off-site location where it was determined the backpack **was not an explosive device**.

NOTE:

There have been reports circulating of a previous threat/incident at Temple Beth-El. We are confirming this information. BPD South Precinct officers responded to Temple Beth-El earlier in the morning at around 5:50 AM on report of a fire call.

Officers along with Birmingham Fire and Rescue personnel (BFRS) responded to the location. Officers observed a propane tank and clothing which had been set on fire in the area; however, there was no damage to the synagogue.

BPD and the FBI are investigating the facts surrounding the earlier fire and if the two incidents are connected.

Person of Interest:

At around 12:15 PM, FBI agents took a person of interest (adult male) into custody. The FBI transported the person of interest to their Birmingham Headquarters where FBI agents and BPD detectives conducted an interview with him.

At the conclusion of the interview, the person of interest was transported to the Birmingham City Jail where he was placed under a 48-Hour Felony Extension for the State of Alabama charge Arson 2nd Degree.

We ask that anyone with additional information contact BPD directly @ (205) 254-1764 OR remain anonymous by dialing Crime Stoppers @ (205) 254-7777.

Anonymous tips can also be submitted to Crime Stoppers through the Birmingham Police Department's Mobile App. Simply download the app and submit a tip. Updates will be provided as information becomes available. If the tip to Crime Stoppers leads to an arrest, Crime Stoppers will provide a cash reward.