

# Acid threat defused by bomb cops

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The Bomb Squad averted two potential explosions yesterday when officers removed highly unstable picric acid from an abandoned Staten Island Developmental Center (SIDC) building in Willowbrook and from the College of Staten Island's Sunnyside campus, police said.

In a delicate hourlong operation at SIDC that began at 6:30 p.m., a Bomb Squad team carried out 14 containers with 25 pounds of the dangerous acid from Building 2, an old laboratory that has been locked for years, police said.

About 40 police and firefighters were called to the scene, according to Deputy Inspector Peter Scalabrino of the 120th Precinct, who was at the scene.

The action at Willowbrook came about following a tip police got only a few hours earlier, while they were removing vials of picric acid from CSI.

Police officers Joseph Carlucci and Andrew Cappa of the Emergency Services Unit 5 went directly from the college to Willowbrook with a Bomb Squad unit shortly after 1:30 p.m.

"We came over here and figured we could get rid of the acid right away, but when we saw how much there was, we had to call in two more Bomb Squad units," Carlucci said.

Firefighters and paramedics were already at the scene, because of the possibility of an explosion.

Picric acid can explode if it has been sitting around for some time, because it crystallizes and can become unstable, according to Bomb Squad officials.

"Some of the acid the team removed was definitely crystallized," said Sgt. Thomas Six of the 122nd Precinct, who ran the temporary headquarters in Building 3 from 3:30 to 7:40 p.m.

"The Bomb Squad was soaking



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Firefighters dressed in protective gear get instructions from Deputy Fire Chief Warren Haring at the Staten Island Developmental Center.