

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

The University of South Florida Police Department's guidelines are based on recommendations of the FBI, the U.S. Postal Service, and the Centers for Disease Control and the USF Health Science Center

The following is offered for informational and instructional purposes. This document was originally issued after September 11th. It has been updated with current information and contains other resources that will answer most questions.

HOW TO HANDLE SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES & LETTERS

HOW TO HANDLE ANTHRAX AND OTHER BIOLOGICAL AGENT THREATS

The University of South Florida Police Department has developed a strong, systematic approach to assist University Community members if anyone receives a suspicious package or letter. Many facilities in communities around the country have received anthrax threat letters. Most were empty envelopes; some have contained powdery substances. Even though many of these threats have been unfounded, our top priority is to provide a safe learning environment, so we take them seriously. These guidelines provide procedures for handling such incidents.

REMAIN CALM

1. Anthrax organisms can cause infection in the skin, gastrointestinal system, or the lungs. To do, so the organism must be rubbed into abraded skin, swallowed, or inhaled as a fine, aerosolized mist. Disease can be prevented after exposure to the anthrax spores by early treatment with the appropriate antibiotics. Anthrax is not spread from one person to another person.
2. For anthrax to be effective as a covert agent, it must be aerosolized into very small particles. This is difficult to do, and requires a great deal of technical skill and special equipment. If these small particles are inhaled, life-threatening lung infection can occur, but prompt recognition and treatment are effective.

SUSPICIOUS UNOPENED LETTER OR PACKAGE MARKED WITH THREATENING MESSAGE SUCH AS "ANTHRAX"

1. Do not shake or empty the contents of any suspicious envelope or package.
2. PLACE the envelope or package in a plastic bag or some other type of container to prevent leakage of contents.
3. If you do not have any container, then COVER the envelope or package with anything (e.g., clothing, paper, trash can, etc.) and do not remove this cover.
4. Then LEAVE the room and CLOSE the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering (i.e., keep others away).
5. WASH your hands with **soap and water** to prevent spreading any powder to your face.
6. Isolate all persons exposed to the contents in another area nearby. ***Do not leave the area until advised to do so by local law enforcement and/or emergency medical personnel.***
7. What to do next...
 - If you are at **HOME**, then report the incident to local police.
 - If you are at **WORK**, then report the incident to the **University Police (974-2628 or "911")**, and notify your building supervisor or an available supervisor.
8. LIST all people who were in the room or area when this suspicious letter or package was recognized. Give this list to both the local public health authorities and law enforcement officials for follow-up investigations and advice.

ENVELOPE WITH POWDER AND POWDER SPILLS OUT ONTO SURFACE

1. **DO NOT try to CLEAN UP the powder.** COVER the spilled contents immediately with anything (e.g., clothing, paper, trash can, etc.) and do not remove this cover!
2. Then LEAVE the room and CLOSE the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering (i.e., keep others away).
3. WASH your hands with **soap and water** to prevent spreading any powder to your face.
4. What to do next...
 - If you are at **HOME**, then report the incident to local police.
 - If you are at **WORK**, then report the incident to the **University Police** by dialing "**911**", **and** notify your building supervisor or an available supervisor.
5. Isolate all persons exposed to the contents in another area nearby. **Do not leave the area until advised to do so by local law enforcement and/or emergency medical personnel.**
6. REMOVE heavily contaminated clothing as soon as possible and place in a plastic bag, or some other container that can be sealed. This clothing bag should be given to the emergency responders for proper handling.
7. SHOWER with **soap and water** as soon as possible. *Do Not Use Bleach Or Other Disinfectant On Your Skin.*
8. If possible, list all people who were in the room or area, especially those who had actual contact with the powder. Give this list to both the local public health authorities so that proper instructions can be given for medical follow-up, and to law enforcement officials for further investigation.

QUESTION OF ROOM CONTAMINATION BY AEROSOLIZATION

For example: small device triggered, warning that air-handling system is contaminated, or warning that a biological agent released in a public space.

1. Turn off local fans or ventilation units in the area.
2. LEAVE area immediately.
3. CLOSE the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering (i.e., keep others away).
4. What to do next...
 - If you are at **HOME**, then **dial "911"** to report the incident to local police and the local FBI field office.
 - If you are at **WORK**, then **dial "911"** to report the incident to the **University Police**, **and** notify your building supervisor or an available supervisor.
5. Isolate all persons exposed to the contents in another area nearby. **Do not leave the area until advised to do so by local law enforcement and/or emergency medical personnel.**
6. If possible, list all people who were in the room or area. Give this list to both the local public health authorities so that proper instructions can be given for medical follow-up, and to law enforcement officials for further investigation.

HOW TO IDENTIFY SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES AND LETTERS

Some characteristics of suspicious packages and letters include the following...

- Excessive postage
- Handwritten or poorly typed addresses
- Incorrect titles
- Title, but no name
- Misspellings of common words
- Oily stains, discolorations or odor
- No return address
- Excessive weight
- Lopsided or uneven envelope
- Protruding wires or aluminum foil

- Excessive security material such as masking tape, string, etc.
- Visual distractions
- Ticking sound
- Marked with restrictive endorsements, such as “Personal” or “Confidential”
- Shows a city or state in the postmark that does not match the return address

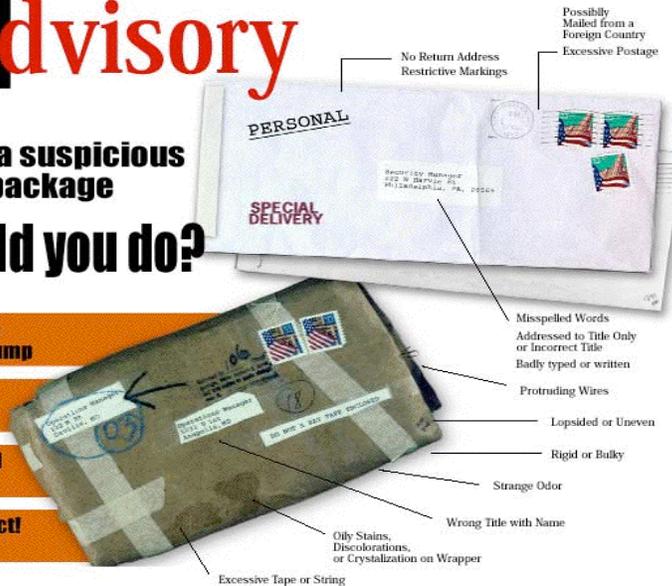
SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE IDENTIFICATION

FBI Advisory

If you receive a suspicious letter or package

What should you do?

- 1 **Handle with care
Don't shake or bump**
- 2 **Isolate and look
for indicators**
- 3 **Don't Open, Smell
or Taste**
- 4 **Treat it as Suspect!
Call 911**



BOMBS BY MAIL

Keep in mind that a bomb can be enclosed in either a package or an envelope, and its outward appearance is limited only by the imagination of the bomber. However, some unique characteristics of mail bombs may assist the identification of a suspect mailing. To apply these characteristics, it is important to know the type of mail your organization or your home receives.

- * Mail bombs may bear restricted endorsements such as "Personal" or "Private." These characteristics are important when the addressee does not usually receive personal mail at the office.
- * Addressee's name or title may be inaccurate.
- * Return address may be fictitious or not available.
- * Mail bombs may have distorted handwriting or the name and address may be prepared with homemade labels or cut-and-paste lettering.
- * Mail bombs may have protruding wires, aluminum foil, or oil stains and may emit a peculiar odor.
- * Cancellation or postmark may show a different location than the return address.
- * Mail bombs may have excessive postage.

- * Letter bombs may feel rigid, or appear uneven or lopsided.
- * Package bombs may be unprofessionally wrapped with several combinations of tape used to secure the package and may be endorsed "Fragile-Handle With Care" or "Rush-Do Not Delay."
- * Package bombs may have an irregular shape, soft spots, or bulges.
- * Package bombs may make a sloshing sound. Although placed devices may buzz or tick, mailed bombs generally do not.
- * Pressure or resistance may be noted when removing contents from an envelope or package.

IF YOU ARE SUSPICIOUS OF A MAILING AND ARE UNABLE TO VERIFY THE CONTENTS WITH THE ADDRESSEE OR SENDER:

1. DO NOT OPEN.
2. Isolate the mailing and evacuate the immediate area.
3. Do not put it in water or a confined space such as a desk drawer or filing cabinet.
4. If possible, open windows in the immediate area to assist in venting potential explosive gases.
5. If you have any reason to believe a letter or package is suspicious, do not take a chance or worry about possible embarrassment if the item turns out to be innocent-instead, contact the **University Police (974-2628)** if at work, or if at work, your local police department and Postal Inspector for professional assistance.

SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE OR LETTER WITH A CONTRAPTION INSIDE

If the situation arises in which someone inadvertently opened a suspicious letter or package containing a contraption (i.e. wires, batteries, etc.) proceed as follows:

1. Leave the letter or package where it is, EXIT the room and CLOSE the door to the room.
2. Evacuate the area.
3. **Dial 911.**
4. Provide information to police officers, as they arrive.

EVERY DAY LIFE SUGGESTIONS – THREAT LEVEL ORANGE

- Continue normal activities but be aware of your surroundings. Exercise caution when traveling.
- Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to your local law enforcement agency.
- Develop an emergency communications and disaster plan that **all** family members understand. Practice your plan. Contact neighbors to discuss their plans and needs.
- Establish an out-of-area friend or relative as a single point of contact to coordinate family messages.
- Create an emergency contact list for each family member to carry. This list should contain telephone numbers, e-mail addresses and pager numbers.
- Determine meeting places and escape routes for you and your family if you become separated.

- Prepare a disaster supplies kit to sustain your family for three to seven days that includes a supply of water, food, flashlight and batteries, a battery-powered radio, first-aid kit and medicines, a change of clothing, an extra set of keys, duct tape and plastic sheeting and important documents.
- Be prepared to do without service you normally depend on that could be disrupted – electricity, telephone, natural gas, gasoline pumps and Internet transactions.
- In the immediate area of a terrorist event, be prepared to respond to official instructions.

SUGGESTED WEB SITES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

www.redcross.org/services/disaster/keepsafe/unexpected.html

www.emergencyemail.org/cdc

www.fema.org

www.redcross.org

www.floridadisaster.org

www.survive-nbc.org