



National Protection and Programs Directorate Federal Protective Service

Hazardous Information Training Sheet

Safe Mail Handling Procedures. *It is important that every employee handling or receiving mail can identify a suspicious letter or parcel. Although occurrences are extremely rare, it is essential to know what to do when suspicious mail is received. All staff must remain alert for the tell-tale signs of potentially dangerous mail and packages.*

How to Recognize Suspicious Packages and Mail

One indicator of a suspicious package or piece of mail includes inappropriate or unusual labeling, such as:

- ✓ Excessive postage
- ✓ Misspelled common words
- ✓ No return address or strange return address
- ✓ Unusual addressing, such as not being addressed to a specific person or the use of incorrect titles or titles with no name
- ✓ Restrictive markings, such as "personal," "confidential," or "do not x-ray"

Other indicators include an unusual or inappropriate appearance, including:

- ✓ Powdery substances felt through or appearing on the item
- ✓ Oily stains or discolorations on the exterior
- ✓ Strange odors
- ✓ Excessive packaging material, like tape or string
- ✓ Lopsided or bulky shape of envelopes or boxes
- ✓ Ticking sounds, protruding wires, or exposed aluminum foil

Procedures for Handling to Suspicious Packages and Mail

- ✓ Stay calm.
- ✓ Do not open the letter or package (or open any further), do not shake it, do not show it to others, or empty its contents.
- ✓ Leave the letter or package where it is or gently place it on the nearest flat surface.
- ✓ If possible, gently cover the letter (use a trash can, article of clothing, etc.).
- ✓ Shut off any fans or equipment in the area that may circulate the material.
- ✓ Alert others nearby to relocate to an area away from the site of the suspicious item.
- ✓ Take essential belongings, like cell phones, keys, purse, etc. with you in case return to your office is delayed.
- ✓ Contact the Federal Protective Service immediately at 1-877-437-7411.
- ✓ Leave and close the door to the space containing the suspicious letter or package, cover the threshold area under the door with a towel or a coat if possible, and section off the area (keep others away).
- ✓ To prevent spreading any powder or hazardous substance to your face, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.