



Mailroom Security Guide

November 2010

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Safety First

Even with the proliferation of e-mail, your mailroom remains a physical connection between your operation and the outside world. That's why it's important to take steps so you and your staff can recognize suspicious letters and parcels, and respond to minimize the risk of injury.

In New Jersey, we are especially aware of the threat when dangerous material is sent by mail. Soon after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, letters laced with anthrax were sent to media outlets and two US senators. Five people died of the bacterial disease, and 17 were sickened, including five in New Jersey. Those letters were processed by the postal facility in Hamilton, Mercer County, which remained closed until 2005. While the state suffered no fatalities, anthrax spores were found in a mailbox near Princeton University.

The anthrax letters spawned tens of thousands of hoax "white powder" letters over the past nine years. Some were sent as pranks, but many were intended to frighten recipients and disrupt business.

However, Essex County resident Thomas J. Mosser was killed in 1994 by a package bomb mailed to his North Caldwell home by Theodore J. Kaczynski. Mosser was one of three people killed, and 23 injured, by Kaczynski, who came to be known as the "Unabomber" during a 17-year string of bombings.

Recently, a series of parcel bombs from Yemen addressed for locations in the United States were intercepted. They have been attributed to a group affiliated with al-Qaida.

Continued vigilance is warranted and prudent. We invite you to use this guide, and the accompanying poster, so you can prepare in case your mailroom receives a suspicious letter, parcel or package.

Charles B. McKenna, Director
New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness
November 2010

Best Practices

- This guide provides an overview of how to recognize potential hazards sent in mail or packages. These threats can include bombs, as well as biological (such as anthrax), chemical and radiological (“dirty bomb”) agents. The guide includes material from the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the US Department of Homeland Security, and the US Postal Service.
- Ideas: <http://www.usps.com/communications/news/security/bestpractices.htm>.
- Planning and Training: Preparation makes a difference in an emergency.
- What to Look For: Indicators of suspicious letters, parcels and packages.
- How to Respond: Threats can be mitigated with proper procedures.



Planning and Training

Take these steps to prepare for potential danger:

- Develop an emergency response plan for your mailroom and business. See an example at: <http://www.ready.gov/business/downloads/sampleplan.pdf>
- Coordinate with local authorities and conduct regular drills of the plan (exercises at <http://www.ready.gov/business/talk/practice.html>).
- Institute centralized receiving of mail and packages. Those responsible for sorting should be instructed on how to recognize suspicious items.
- Advise all employees of suspicious indicators (display poster from <http://www.usps.com/communications/news/security/suspiciousmail.htm>), and urge them to be wary when they receive an unexpected letter or package.
- Encourage employees to notify a supervisor of their suspicions and not to open the item.
- Consider on-site training from United States Postal Inspection Service.



What to Look For

What constitutes a suspicious package?
Here are some things worth noticing:

- Excessive postage or tape
- Sent from a foreign country, especially if rare for you
- An odd or unknown sender
- Misspelled words
- Markings such as “personal” or “do not X-ray”
- Powder or unusual substance
- Oily stains, discoloration, or evidence of crystallization
- Odd odor
- Addressed to a title, or using an incorrect title for a person
- Lopsided or uneven appearance
- Protruding Wires

SUSPICIOUS MAIL OR PACKAGES

Protect yourself, your business, and your mailroom.

If you receive a suspicious letter or package:

- Stop. Don't handle.
- Isolate it immediately.
- Don't open, smell, or taste.
- Activate your emergency plan. Notify a supervisor.

Restrictive markings. No return address. Misspelled words. Badly typed or written. Sealed with tape. Unknown powder or suspicious substance. Possibly mailed from a foreign country. Excessive postage.

PERSONAL!
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
272 N. HARVEY ST.
PHILADELPHIA

Operations Manager
532 M St.
Saville, MO

DO NOT X-RAY TAPE ENCLOSED

Operations Manager
5032 D 1ST
Annapolis, MD

Protruding wires. Rigid or bulky. Lopsided or uneven. Incorrect title or addressed to title only. Strange odor. Oily stains, discolorations, crystallization on wrapper. Excessive tape.

If you suspect the mail or package contains a bomb (explosive), or radiological, biological, or chemical threat:

- Isolate area immediately
- Call 911
- Wash your hands with soap and water

To order this poster call 1-800-333-0317.

Poster 54
September 2006
PSN 750-01-000-300

How to Respond

If you suspect a letter or package contains a bomb, or biological, chemical or radiological threat:

- Stop. Don't open, handle, shake, taste or smell.
- Isolate the area immediately; keep others away.
- Call 911.
- Activate your emergency plan.
- Notify a supervisor.
- Wash your hands with soap and water.

Suspicious activity with a possible nexus to terrorism in New Jersey should be reported immediately to local law enforcement and relevant facility security management. Activity should also be reported to the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness 24/7 hotline at 866-472-3365 or tips@NJHomelandSecurity.gov.



Our Most Effective Weapon Against Terrorism is YOU.

IF YOU SUSPECT IT REPORT IT.
1-866-4-SAFE-NJ
(1-866-472-3365)
tips@NJHomelandSecurity.gov
Anonymous calls accepted.



Resources

- New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness
609-584-4000
<http://www.njhomelandsecurity.gov/>
- United States Postal Inspection Service
877-876-2455
<https://postalinspectors.uspis.gov/>
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
<http://www.ready.gov/business/plan/index.html>

