

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

If you think that you need assistance
Dial 911.

Some of the information contained in this pamphlet was provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Sangamon County

This brochure has been prepared to help you better understand biological threats, and help you determine what you should do if circumstances warrant immediate action.

HOW TO HANDLE ANTHRAX AND OTHER BIOLOGICAL AGENT THREATS

You may receive anthrax threat letters. Some can be empty envelopes; some can contain powdery substances. The purpose of these guidelines is to recommend procedures for handling such incidents.

DO NOT PANIC

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. What to do next...
 - If you are at **HOME**, then report the incident to the police.
 - If you are at **WORK**, then report the incident to the police, **and** notify your building security official or an available supervisor.
7. LIST all people who were in the room or area when this suspicious letter or package was recognized. Give this list to both the Sangamon County Department of Public Health and the Sangamon County Sheriff's Office 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. DO NOT LEAVE until authorities indicate to do so, 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 the police.
 - If you are at **WORK**, then report the incident to the police, **and** notify your building security official or an available supervisor.
5. 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.
6. SHOWER with **soap and water** as soon as possible. *Do Not Use Bleach Or Other Disinfectant On Your Skin.*
7. 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 Sangamon County Department of Public Health so that proper instructions can be given for medical follow-up, and to the Sangamon County Sheriff's Office 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 and go to a confined space where no one else is present.
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 the police.
 - If you are at **WORK**, then *dial “911”* to report the incident to the police and notify your building security official or an available supervisor.
5. SHUT down air handling system in the building, if possible.
6. If possible, list all people who were in the room or area. Give this list to both the Sangamon County Department of Public Health so that proper instructions can be given for medical follow-up, and to the Sangamon County Sheriff's Office for further investigation.