

Suspicious Envelopes and Parcels Protocol

I. Introduction

Many universities have experienced incidents involving suspicious items, and particularly suspicious envelopes or parcels. Often, the concern is about bioterrorism, with particular concerns about anthrax or other chemical substances.

Anthrax can cause illness in several ways: skin infection, gastrointestinal infection, or inhalation infection. To cause illness, the organism must be rubbed into skin that is cut or abraded; swallowed; or inhaled as a fine mist. It is not contagious from one person to another. Soap kills anthrax on the skin. All forms of anthrax disease are generally treatable with antibiotics.

II. Protocol

Suspicious Items Generally (see also Bomb Threat Protocol)

1. If you should observe a suspicious object, report it to the BSU Police Department immediately, but under no circumstances should you touch, tamper, or move the object in any way.
2. Notify staff of the situation and prepare them for evacuation.
3. Meet arriving emergency responders and brief them, letting them speak with the person who found the item and informing them where the item is located.
4. Law enforcement will assume command of the scene and take any necessary action, such as evacuating the building.

Envelopes or Packages of Suspicious or Unknown Origin

For anthrax to cause lung infection, it must be aerosolized (that is, spread in the air) in very small particles. Producing small particles is very difficult, and usually requires a great deal of technical skill and special equipment. When handling or opening mail, attention to the procedures below should help protect against anthrax infection. In the event an exposure does occur, it is important to obtain medical attention so antibiotics can be started promptly.

1. PACKAGE MARKED WITH OR CONTAINING THREATENING MESSAGE

- If package or letter is not open, DO NOT OPEN IT.
- LEAVE it and EVACUATE the room.

- KEEP others from entering the room.
- NOTIFY your supervisor, then call the BSU Police Department.
- No medical attention or additional sanitization is recommended.

2. OPEN ENVELOPE OR PACKAGE WITH POWDER, OR POWDER SPILLS OUT ONTO SURFACE OR UNOPENED LETTER OR PACKAGE

- DO NOT clean powder up. Do not touch it. Keep others away.
- WASH hands with soap and water.
- DO NOT brush off your clothes.
- EVACUATE the room.
- KEEP others from entering the room.
- NOTIFY your supervisor, then call the BSU Police Department.
- Law enforcement will assure proper custody and packing of the letter or package.
- REMOVE clothing as soon as change of clothing is available and put on fresh clothing.
- PLACE the clothing you were wearing in a plastic bag. Then wash your hands with water and soap. If your clothes are contaminated, discard them after double bagging in plastic.
- SHOWER with SOAP and WATER as soon as possible.
- MAKE a list of all people who had direct contact with powder and give the list to local public health authorities. Any necessary medical attention or individual decontamination will be recommended by public health and safety officials.

3. OPENING PACKAGE OR LETTER PRODUCES A CLOUD OF DUST OR A SMALL EXPLOSION

- LEAVE room immediately; tell everyone in the room to leave with you.
- SECURE (lock if possible) entry to room.
- NOTIFY your supervisor.
- CALL the BSU Police Department.
- REMAIN on the premises (but outside the room where the problem occurred) until responders arrive.
- MAKE a list of all people who may have directly breathed the dust or smoke and give it to local public health authorities. Any necessary medical attention or individual decontamination will be recommended by public health and safety officials.

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**SUSPICIOUS ENVELOPES AND PARCELS
PROTOCOL CHECKLIST**

A SUSPICIOUS OBJECT HAS BEEN OBSERVED AND
THE BSU POLICE DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN NOTIFIED.

STAFF IN THE AFFECTED AREA HAVE BEEN
EVACUATED.

POLICE HAVE ASSUMED COMMAND OF THE SCENE.

OTHER EMERGENCY RESPONDERS, SUCH AS THE
BOMB SQUAD AND FIRE DEPARTMENT, HAVE BEEN
NOTIFIED BY THE POLICE TO RESPOND.

POST-INCIDENT, CLEANUP, DECONTAMINATION, AND
MEDICAL TREATMENT HAVE PROCEEDED
ACCORDING TO THE SPECIFICS CONTAINED IN THE
SUSPICIOUS ITEMS PROTOCOL, OR ACCORDING TO
THE DIRECTIONS OF EMERGENCY CREWS.

SUSP. ENVELOPES & PARCELS CHECKLIST