

# Mail Center Security

## IDENTIFYING A SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE

If packages coming into the building have any of the following characteristics, they will be considered suspicious:

1. Excessive postage
2. Misspelled word
3. Addressed to title only
4. Rigid or bulky
5. Badly typed or written
6. Fictitious, unfamiliar or no return address
7. Strange odor
8. Lopsided
9. Oily stains
10. Wrong Title with name
11. Protruding wires
12. Powdery substance on outside

**UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE**

# SUSPICIOUS MAIL ALERT

## If you receive a suspicious letter or package:

**1** Handle with care. Don't shake or bump.

**2** Isolate it immediately

**3** Don't open, smell, touch or taste.

**4** Treat it as suspect. Call local law enforcement authorities

**If a parcel is open and/or a threat is identified . . .**

<b>For a Bomb:</b> Evacuate Immediately Call Police Contact Postal Inspectors Call Local Fire Department/HAZMAT Unit	<b>For Radiological:</b> Limit Exposure - Don't Handle Evacuate Area Shield Yourself From Object Call Police Contact Postal Inspectors Call Local Fire Department/HAZMAT Unit	<b>For Biological or Chemical:</b> Isolate - Don't Handle Evacuate Immediate Area Wash Your Hands With Soap and Warm Water Call Police Contact Postal Inspectors Call Local Fire Department/HAZMAT Unit
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# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

## *Anthrax and the Mail*

### Q & A:

#### **How can mail get cross-contaminated with anthrax?**

CDC (Centers For Disease Control And Prevention) does not have specific studies to address this, however, cross-contamination of the mail could occur during the processing, sorting, and delivery of mail when an envelope comes in contact with an envelope, piece of equipment (e.g., an electronic sorting machine), or other surface that is contaminated with *Bacillus anthracis* spores. In addition, airborne spores in contaminated postal facilities before they were cleaned might play a role.

#### **When there is a known incident, how can I prevent anthrax exposure from cross-contaminated mail?**

There are no scientifically proven recommendations for preventing exposure. However, there are some common-sense steps people can take:

- Do not open suspicious mail
- Keep mail away from your face when you open it
- Do not blow or sniff mail or mail contents
- Avoid vigorous handling of mail, such as tearing or shredding
- Wash your hands after handling the mail
- Discard envelopes after opening mail.

#### **What is the risk for getting anthrax from handling my own mail?**

If there is a risk for inhalation anthrax associated with exposure to cross-contaminated mail, it is very low. For example, about 85 million pieces of mail were processed on the few days in 2001 after envelopes containing *Bacillus anthracis* (addressed to two U.S. senators) passed through the New Jersey and District of Columbia sorting facilities until they were closed. Despite the fact that both of these facilities had evidence of widespread environmental contamination with *B. anthracis* spores and the fact that public health officials had been aggressively looking for anthrax cases, no new cases of anthrax were identified during that time.

#### **As a postal employee, am I at risk for getting anthrax from handling mail on the job when there is an anthrax cross-contaminated mail event?**

If there is a risk for inhalation anthrax associated with exposure to cross-contaminated mail, it is very low, even for postal employees and persons who work in company

mailrooms. CDC has published interim recommendations that are intended to assist personnel responsible for occupational health and safety in developing a comprehensive program to reduce potential cutaneous or inhalation exposures to *Bacillus anthracis* spores among workers in work sites where mail is handled or processed. Detailed guidelines may be found on these Web sites:

- [emergency.cdc.gov/documentsapp/anthrax/10312001/han51.asp](http://emergency.cdc.gov/documentsapp/anthrax/10312001/han51.asp)
- [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5043a6.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5043a6.htm)