

Campus Safety Policy
Suspicious Mail, Packages and
Powders Protocol
Policy Number: Safety 07
Supersedes: UNMC 2007
Effective Date: December 31, 2001
Revised Date: July 31, 2014
Reviewed Date: July 31, 2014

Suspicious Mail, Packages and Powders Protocol

With the increase threat of Bioterrorism and use of the mail system to deliver biological agents, it is important that steps be taken to minimize the risk. To prevent such exposures and subsequent infection, all persons should learn how to recognize a suspicious package or envelope and take appropriate steps to protect themselves and others.

I. How to Recognize and Handle a Suspicious Package or Envelope

A. Recognize a Suspicious Package or Envelope

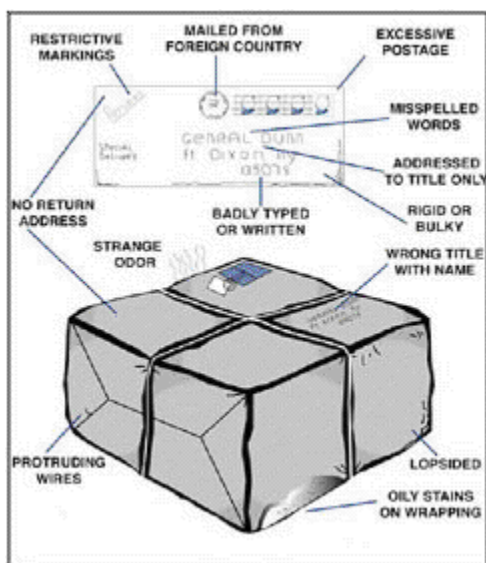
Some characteristics of suspicious packages and envelopes include the following:

- Inappropriate or unusual labeling
 - Excessive postage
 - Handwritten or poorly typed addresses
 - Misspellings of common words
 - Strange return address or no return address
 - Incorrect titles or title without a name
 - Not addressed to a specific person
 - Marked with restrictions, such as “Personal,” “Confidential,” or “Donot x-ray”
 - Marked with any threatening language
 - Postmarked from a city or state that does not match the return address

- Appearance
 - Powdery substance felt through or appearing on the package or envelope
 - Oily stains, discolorations, or odor
 - Lopsided or uneven envelope

- Excessive packaging material such as masking tape, string, etc.
- Other suspicious signs
 - Excessive weight
 - Ticking sound
 - Protruding wires or aluminum foil

If a package or envelope appears suspicious, DO NOT OPEN IT. Contact Security at Extension 9-5111.



B. Handling a Suspicious Package or Envelope¹

- Do not shake or empty the contents of any suspicious package or envelope.
- Do not carry the package or envelope, show it to others or allow others to examine it.
- Put the package or envelope down on a stable surface; do not sniff, touch, taste, or look closely at it or at any contents which may have spilled.
- Alert others in the area about the suspicious package or envelope. Leave the area, close any doors, and take actions to prevent others from entering the area. If possible, shut off the ventilation system.
- WASH hands with soap and water to prevent spreading potentially infectious material to face or skin.
- Seek additional instructions for exposed or potentially exposed persons from Healthcare Epidemiology.
- If at work, notify Security via 559-5111 and your supervisor. If at home, contact 911.
- If possible, create a list of persons who were in the room or area when this suspicious letter or package was recognized and a list of persons who also may have handled this package or letter. Give this list to Security and local

law enforcement officials.

II. Envelope or Package from Unknown Senders or Foreign Country

Several of the staff and faculty are world-renowned. This results in receiving mail from unknown senders or from foreign countries. The common recommendation to the public is if the mail is from an unknown source, and does not meet any of the criteria outlined in Section I. A., the receiver has two options:

- Open the mail – if the mail contains anything suspicious follow the procedure for Handling a Suspicious Package or Envelope (See I. B.), or
- Throw the mail away unopened

Throwing mail away may result in the loss of important information, requests or referrals. Procedures have been established to help minimize the risk of opening these types of packages and envelopes.

- If possible contact the sender to verify the contents of the package/envelope prior to opening it
- If contents cannot be verified contact Security Ext. 9-5111
- Security will bring ziplock bags for envelopes or large bags for packages.
- Security will place the item in the designated locked cabinet until arrangements can be made to open it
- These items will be opened in a safe manner and contents identified
- The addressee will be informed by Security of the contents, and if determined to be safe, the content will be returned to the addressee
- Security will notify local officials via 911 if a powder or other suspicious substance is found

III. Suspicious Powders

At times, individuals may discover powder in an area considered “unusual”. Contact Security at 9-5111 to assess the situation. All testing must be initiated by local law enforcement or fire department hazmat personnel. Current guidelines do not recommend testing of unknown powders unless a credible threat or another indicator exists that a biological agent may be involved. Security may contact 911 to determine if further action or follow-up is needed.

IV. Known Biological Agent Threat

Contact Security at 9-5111. Security will contact 911 to investigate the threat.

V. Documentation

A Security Special report concerning bioterror incidents on the campus or one of the off-site facilities will be submitted to the following individuals:

Chancellor
Vice Chancellor for Business & Finance
VP Support Operations
Biosafety Officer
UNMC and Hospital Safety Offices
Senior Associate Vice Chancellor for Business & Finance
Hospital Emergency Service Director

For more information refer to the Emergency Preparedness Procedures.