

Emergency Preparedness Pointers

Check ... It Could Be In The Mail

The odds are really against it. As a matter of fact, they are far less than your chances of winning a lottery. Regardless of the odds, it is important that you are aware and prepared. The life you save could be your own along with the lives of co-workers and/or family. The United States Postal Service goes to great lengths to keep threatening mail from ever reaching the general public. But even with these safeguards in place, a letter bomb is a terrorist threat anyone could face.

There are some characteristics common to suspicious mail. Here are some defining features that will help you identify potentially dangerous mail.



★ Unusual Labeling ★

- Excessive Postage
- Poorly handwritten/typed address
- Misspellings of common words
- Strange or no return address
- Incorrect titles or title without a name
- Not addressed to a specific person
- Marked with restrictions like:
Personal, Confidential, Do Not X-Ray
- Marked with threatening language
- Return address does not match the city or state of the postmark

★ Appearance/Features ★

- Powdery substance on the outside or felt through the package or envelope
- Oily stains, discolorations or strange odor
- Lopsided, oddly mishapen or uneven envelope
- Excessive packaging material such as masking tape/string, etc.
- Excessive weight
- Ticking sound
- Aluminum foil or wires sticking out of the package/envelope

Do and Don'ts For Handling a Suspicious Letter or Package

DO NOT ...

- ✗ Shake or empty the contents of the envelope or package
- ✗ Carry the package, show it to others or allow others to examine it
- ✗ Sniff, touch, taste or look closely at any contents that may have spilled out of the package

DO ...

- ★ Put the package or envelope down on a stable surface
- ★ Alert others in the area about the suspicious package or envelope
- ★ Evacuate the area and shut off the building ventilation system to that location
- ★ Close the doors and take actions to prevent others from entering the area that has been evacuated
- ★ Wash hands with soap and water, make sure to get any substances from the package cleaned from your hands and clothes
- ★ Identify anyone else that handled the letter or package and have them wash off
- ★ If at work, notify management, building security and law enforcement
- ★ If at home, notify local law enforcement immediately

For information on developing a suspected letter security plan for a business go to :

<http://www.usps.com/websites/depart/inspect/bombcorp.htm>