

Suspicious Packages, Letters or Substances Biological or Chemical Threats

SCREENING PACKAGES AND LETTERS

BIOLOGICAL OR CHEMICAL THREATS targeting individuals or departments can be controlled by screening incoming materials and by following the procedures listed below. University, City of Columbus and State of Ohio Public Safety agencies have plans in place to deal with these types of threats. Following the procedures below will activate those plans and promote the highest level of safety while minimizing the disruption associated with these incidents. Common features of SUSPECT letters/packages are:

- ◆ Liquid leaking from package
- ◆ No return address
- ◆ Hand written or poorly typed address
- ◆ Misspelling of common words
- ◆ Restrictive markings such as "Confidential", "Personal", etc.
- ◆ Excessive weight and/or feel of a powdery or foreign substance
- ◆ Foreign post marks and / or writing
- ◆ Source of the letter / package is not recognized by recipient / addressee

IF YOU RECEIVE A LETTER OR NOTE THREATENING BIOLOGICAL CONTAMINATION (i.e., ANTHRAX) OR OTHER SUSPECT SUBSTANCES:

1. **RELAX AND REMAIN CALM** – Although any threatened use of a biological agent must be treated as though it is real, experience has demonstrated that these are likely to be a HOAX. If the suspected biological agent is reported as anthrax, be assured that it is NOT generally contagious (i.e., spread from person to person) and that treatment is available and effective if administered before the onset of symptoms.
2. **DO NOT OPEN THE LETTER OR PACKAGE.**
3. **CONTACT UNIVERSITY POLICE @ 292-2121.**
4. **REMAIN AT THE SITE UNTIL POLICE ARRIVE WITH INSTRUCTIONS.** Public Safety / Healthcare responders can evaluate the risk to those in the room at the time of potential exposure, as well as any impact on the remainder of the building.

IF YOU INADVERTENTLY OPEN A SUSPECT PACKAGE / LETTER OR IT IS LEAKING (LIQUID OR UNKNOWN SUBSTANCE):

1. **IMMEDIATELY SET THE ITEM DOWN GENTLY AT THE LOCATION WHERE IT WAS OPENED.**
2. **CONTACT UNIVERSITY POLICE @ 292-2121.**
3. **ALL POTENTIALLY EXPOSED PERSONS SHOULD WASH EXPOSED SKIN SURFACES WITH SOAP AND WATER. SHUT DOWN ANY FANS, AIR CONDITIONERS OR HEATERS IF POSSIBLE.**
4. **RETURN TO AN AREA WITHIN THE BUILDING ADJACENT TO THE INITIAL EXPOSURE AND WAIT FOR THE POLICE (FOR EXAMPLE HALLWAY OUTSIDE ORIGINAL ROOM).**
5. **DO NOT ALLOW OTHERS INTO THE AREA. IF ANYONE ENTERS THE AREA, THEY SHOULD STAY IN THE AREA UNTIL INSTRUCTED TO LEAVE BY UNIVERSITY POLICE OR OTHER PUBLIC SAFETY RESPONDERS.**

Public Safety / Healthcare responders can evaluate the risk to those in the room at the time of potential exposure, as well as any impact on the remainder of the building. Based upon that risk assessment, further emergency measures may be implemented as necessary. If the risk is found to be minimal, other areas of the facility will not be disrupted and any necessary actions to return the affected area to normal activity will begin as soon as possible.

WHAT YOU SHOULD NOT DO!

1. **DO NOT** pass the letter or package to others to examine.
2. **DO NOT** touch, smell, taste or try to analyze the substance.
3. **DO NOT** disturb any contents in the letter or package. Handling the letter / package may only spread the substance inside and increase the chances of it getting into the air.
4. **DO NOT** ignore the threat, it must be treated as real until properly evaluated.
5. **DO NOT** leave the building until instructed to do so.

IF YOU HAVE FURTHER QUESTIONS CONTACT OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY (292-1284), UNIVERSITY POLICE (292-2121) OR UNIVERSITY PUBLIC SAFETY (7-6300).