



## **HOW TO HANDLE MAIL CONTAINING A SUSPICIOUS SUBSTANCE**

Envelopes or packages containing a suspicious powdery substance or liquid, or purporting to contain a chemical or biological threat, may be received by mail at the State Capitol/Legislative Office Building complex. To prevent potential exposure and possible subsequent infection, all employees handling mail should know how to recognize a possibly contaminated envelope or package and take appropriate steps to protect themselves and others.

If an envelope or package appears to contain or threatens to contain a suspicious substance, employees **SHOULD NOT OPEN OR TOUCH IT**. Only emergency responders with hazardous material training will handle the package and only when it is deemed necessary.

### **Some characteristics of suspicious envelopes and packages include the following:**

- Actual threat message in or on the package
- 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," "Do not 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

## Steps for handling envelopes or packages containing a suspicious substance:

### **Step 1: Do not panic**

**Step 2: Notify your Supervisor and report the incident to the State Capitol Police**

**Step 3: Turn off the local air conditioner or fan if possible**

**Step 4: Cover the item**

**Step 5: Secure the room and prevent others from entering**

**Step 6: Wash hands with soap and water or use bacterial wipes**

**Step 7: Move to an isolated room nearby, if possible—if not, stay at the site**

**Step 8: Obtain names and phone numbers of all persons in the area**

**Step 9: Wait for further instructions**

### **Step 1: Do not panic**

1. Handle any item suspected of contamination with care.
2. Do not shake, bump or move it.
3. Do not open, smell or taste it.
4. Do not pull the fire alarm.

### **Step 2: Notify your Supervisor and report the incident to the State Capitol Police**

1. Notify your supervisor of the situation.
2. Contact the State Capitol Police Operations Center, phone number **860-240-0240**.
3. Describe the incident in detail to the State Capitol Police Officer answering the phone.

### **Step 3: Turn off the local air conditioner or fan.**

1. Turn off the local air conditioner or fan, if possible.
2. Police/emergency responders will determine whether the entire ventilation and heating system should be shut down.
3. If so, the State Capitol/LOB maintenance contractor will handle this.

### **Step 4: Cover the item.**

1. Do not pass the item around. Do not call co-workers to the area.
2. If you have already handled the item, put it in a drawer.
3. If you have not handled it, cover it with anything (e.g. clothing, paper, trashcan, etc.) if this can be done safely. Do not remove the cover once you have put it in place.

### **Step 5: Secure the room and prevent others from entering.**

1. The area should be secured to prevent others from entering.
2. Cordon off the room/cubicle; obtain help from your supervisor to do this, if necessary.

***Step 6: Wash hands with soap and water or use bacterial wipes.***

1. If there is a sink in the room, anyone who touched the item should wash their hands with soap and water.
2. If there is no sink, wipe hands with bacterial wipes or gel.
3. As soon as practical, shower with soap and water.

***Step 7: Move to an isolated room nearby, if possible – if not, stay at the site.***

1. If you can leave the area and move to an alternate room nearby that is isolated, you should do so.
2. Anyone who touched the item or was in the vicinity should move to this room and wait for further instruction.
3. If no room is available, remain at the site until you receive instructions from emergency response personnel.

***Step 8: Obtain names and phone numbers of all persons in the area.***

1. Make a list of all persons who have touched the item or were in the immediate vicinity.
2. Include contact information, such as phone numbers.
3. Have this information available for law enforcement authorities and other emergency responders.

***Step 9: Wait for further instructions.***

1. If a determination is made by law enforcement authorities or emergency responders that anyone was exposed, you will be provided with further directions.
2. Once officials arrive, necessary decontamination procedures will be determined.
3. Follow-up testing for potential contamination may take between 24 to 48 hours.
4. Cooperating with law enforcement/emergency response authorities and following instructions is important to a successful resolution of the incident.