

Suspicious Mail / Package

Suspicious packages can take any form – letters, books and parcels of varying size, shape and color. Suspicious mail often exhibits some of the following unique characteristics.

Updated

June 9, 2011

Source

U-M Division of Public Safety & Security

United States Postal Service

More Information

<http://police.umich.edu/>

<http://www.usps.com/>

Prevention / Mitigation / Preparedness - Suspicious Mail / Package

Keep all internal storage places, including custodial closets and student lockers, that may serve as hiding places for bombs secured at all times.

- Minimize clutter in hallways and classrooms to facilitate searches.
- Minimize the presence of hazardous materials in the campus as much as possible.
- Establish a building protocol for handling suspicious packages / envelopes by consulting with DPS.
- Designate alternate evacuation routes in case primary routes are blocked or unusable due to security concerns.
- Designate primary and alternate assembly areas.
- Train mailroom and other key personnel to recognize suspicious packages.
- Staff should wear latex gloves when sorting and opening mail.
- Ensure staff is aware of United States Postal Service Suspicious Mail or Package guidelines (available on Office of Emergency Preparedness website under the Resources tab)

Letter and Parcel Bomb Recognition Checklist

Be cautious of:

- Foreign mail, air mail and special deliveries
- Restrictive marking such as “confidential” or “personal”
- Excessive postage
- Handwritten or poorly typed address
- Incorrect titles or addressed to title only
- Misspellings of common words
- Oily stains, crystallization or discolorations on package
- Excessive weight
- Rigid, lopsided or uneven envelopes
- Protruding wires or tinfoil
- Excessive tape or string
- Visual distractions
- No return address
- Strange odor
- Addressee normally does not receive personal mail at office
- Mail appears to be disassembled or re-glued
- Handwriting appears distorted or unusual
- Address prepared to ensure anonymity of sender (i.e., homemade labels, cut-and-paste lettering)
- Wrapping exhibits previous use such as traces of glue, mailing labels, return addresses or tape.
- Several combinations of tape used to secure the parcel or excessive wrapping.

- Unprofessionally wrapped parcel is endorsed “Fragile – Handle with Care” or “Rush – Do Not Delay.”
- Package makes a buzzing or ticking noise.
- Contents of parcel make a sloshing sound.
- Watch for anything that looks like a powdery substance
- Package is hand-delivered or dropped off for a friend.
- Packages wrapped in string (modern packaging materials have eliminated the need for string)
- Packages arriving before or after a phone call from an unknown person asking if the item was received

Response - Suspicious Mail / Package

If you are suspicious of a package or object and are unable to verify the contents with the addressee or sender, follow these steps:

- DO NOT TOUCH IT, TAMPER WITH IT OR MOVE IT!
- IMMEDIATELY DIAL 911 TO REPORT IT TO DPSS

Suspicious letter or package marked with threatening message:

- If possible, cover the envelope or package with anything (e.g., clothing, trash can, etc.) to limit exposure and do not remove this cover
- Leave the room and close the door, or section off the area to keep others away
- Alert everyone in adjacent areas that a suspicious letter or package has been found and direct them to clear the area.
- Once evacuated, list all people who were in the room or area when this suspicious letter or package was recognized. Give this list to DPS.
- Envelope with powder and/or powder spills out onto surface:
- Do not try to clean up the powder/substance.
- Leave the room and close the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering the area.
- Immediately report situation to a supervisor and DPS.

If you believe that you have been contaminated, notify DPS immediately. Go to a secluded area and wait for decontamination assistance. This may involve the following:

- Removal of heavily contaminated clothing that will be placed in a plastic bag, or some other container that can be sealed. The clothing bag will be given to emergency responders for proper handling.
- Showering with soap and water as soon as possible. Bleach or other disinfectant on skin will not be used.
- List all people who were in the room or area, especially those who had actual contact with the powder.
- Follow the instructions of DPS or health care personnel.

Recovery – Suspicious Mail / Package

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): <http://www.umich.edu/~caps/>

Dean of Students Office (DOFS): <http://umich.edu/~dofs/>

Psychological Clinic: <http://www.psychclinic.org/>

Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (FASAP): <http://www.umich.edu/~fasap/>