

FIFTH APWU BIENNIAL
CLERK DIVISION CONFERENCE

Cliff "C.J." Guffey, Director

Thomas L. Thompson

James P. McCarthy

Robert Strunk

SAFETY AND HEALTH

ANTHRAX INFORMATION

GENERAL SESSION

Corey Thompson
Safety and Health Director

Moe Biller, President

ema/opei#2afl-cio(2001)

**OSHA**Occupational Safety & Health Administration
U.S. Department of LaborHome
Index
Search

OSHA Fact Sheet and References on Worker Health and Safety for Anthrax Exposure

What is Anthrax?

Anthrax is an acute infectious disease caused by a spore-forming bacterium called *bacillus anthracis*. It is generally acquired following contact with anthrax-infected animals or anthrax-contaminated animal products. Anthrax is receiving heightened attention recently because of its use as a biological warfare agent. In humans, three types of anthrax infections can occur, based on the route of exposure: cutaneous (skin exposure), inhalational (inhalation exposure), and gastrointestinal (ingestion exposure). Symptoms are dependent on the route of exposure. Those most often associated with skin infections are itching, boils, and formation of a black scab. Symptoms most often associated with inhalation infections are fever, chest pain, and difficulty breathing. Symptoms most often associated with ingestion infections are nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. More general information about anthrax can be found in the following resource:

▶ [CDC Public Health Emergency Preparedness & Response](#)

Who Can be Exposed to Anthrax?

Animal Handling Occupations

Anthrax is most common in occupations involving animals, animal hides or fibers. Grazing animals such as cattle, sheep, goats and horses are chief animal hosts of anthrax. Occupations susceptible to exposure may include shepherds, farmers, butchers, handlers of imported hides or fibers, weavers, veterinarians, and veterinary pathologists.

▶ [Selected Illnesses Which May Result From Exposure in the Work Environment](#)
OSHA Recordkeeping Guidelines, App. C

Workers Exposed Through Criminal/Terrorist Acts

Workers whose jobs would not ordinarily involve anthrax exposure could be exposed through acts of terrorism. Conventional thinking is that terrorists are likely to target places where large populations can be found such as large buildings, sporting events, or mass transit systems. Recent events have shown that there is a wider range of physical locations that could be targeted and this expands the range of employees who could be exposed.

Health Care Workers

Health care personnel working in occupational settings such as hospitals, clinics, and laboratories are susceptible to anthrax exposures from contaminated patients as well as clothing and/or equipment. Exposures can come from activities such as treating or decontaminating contaminated patients.

Emergency Response Workers

Emergency responders, including police, firefighters, emergency medical services workers, and others who are responsible for responding to acts of terrorism may be exposed to anthrax.

- ▶ Emergency First Responder Equipment Guide, U.S. Department of Justice.

How Can Employers Prevent and Control Exposure and Infection?

The methods for preventing and controlling anthrax exposure and infection vary by workplace. **Employers in animal handling occupations** who may anticipate exposure may find the following useful.

- ▶ Anthrax, Veterinary Service, USDA, 10/2001.

Anthrax exposures that result from a criminal or terrorist act are more difficult for unsuspecting employers to prevent and control. Nevertheless, the CDC, USPS and FBI have developed recommendations to address the recent exposures resulting from contaminated mail and packages:

- ▶ How to Handle Anthrax and Other Biological Agent Threats, CDC Health Advisory.
- ▶ We Are Taking Every Possible Measure To Assure Safety Of Customers And The Mail, U.S. Postal Service, 10/17/01, Message to Customers.
- ▶ What to do if you receive a suspicious letter or package [PDF], FBI, 10/12/01

For **health care employers and emergency responders**, there is a larger body of response planning information. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), CDC, the American Hospital Association (AHA), and Department of Defense have several resources about how hospitals can plan and prepare for terrorist events:

- ▶ Counter Terrorism Program, DHHS.
- ▶ Readiness for Potential Attack Using Chemical or Biological Agents, AHA 10/20/01.
- ▶ Hospital Preparedness for Mass Casualties [PDF], AHA & DHHS 8/2000.

Local emergency responders also have an important role in recognizing and responding to terrorist events. The National Domestic Preparedness Office (NDPO), Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), and CDC provide several resources that address readiness and response by emergency responders:

- ▶ National Domestic Preparedness Office, (NDPO)
- ▶ FEMA terrorist incident planning guide
- ▶ CDC Planning Resources

In the event that anthrax is released, controls such as personal protective equipment (e.g., respirators) and decontamination will be needed to limit exposure and prevent secondary infection. You can find additional technical information in the following resources:

- ▶ First Responder References, USDOJ, Office of Justice Programs
- ▶ Laboratory Safety, Anthrax MSDS, Health Canada Online
- ▶ Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Labs, 4th Edition, 5/99 [PDF], CDC
- ▶ Guidelines for the Surveillance and Control of Anthrax in Humans and Animals, WHO
- ▶ Bioterrorism Alleging Use of Anthrax, Interim Guidelines for Management 1998, CDC
- ▶ State and Local Approaches, Mass Casualty Decontamination, USDOJ
- ▶ Standard Precautions for Anthrax - Pulmonary, Yale-New Haven Hospital
- ▶ Medical Management of Biological Casualties Handbook, U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases, 2/2001

Need More Information?

For additional assistance about specific aspects of worker health and safety associated with potential anthrax exposure, contact the following hotlines or helplines.

To report suspicious letter or package:

Call 911 (police) then
contact your local FBI Field Office

For vaccination information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Vaccine Information
National Immunization Hotline (English): 1-800-232-2522
National Immunization Hotline (Spanish): 1-800-232-0233

U.S. Department of Defense
Anthrax Vaccine Immunization Program Information Line: (877) 438-8222
(877-GET-VAC).

For state and local response planning:

Department of Justice
State & Local Domestic Preparedness Helpline: 800-368-6498, 9-6 EST (non-emergency technical assistance)

Centers for Disease Control
Emergency Preparedness & Response Branch Hotline for State Health
Officials: 770-488-7100 (24-hour line)

Health and Human Services, Office of Emergency Preparedness
National Disaster Medical System: (301) 443-1167 or 800-USA-NDMS

To locate most State public health laboratories:

For general worker health and safety information:

OSHA: 1-800-321-OSHA (6742)



October 10, 2001

VICE PRESIDENTS, AREA OPERATIONS
MANAGER, CAPITAL METRO OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Emergency Action Plans

Recent world events have emphasized the need for postal facilities to be prepared to respond to emergencies. The ELM, in Section 850, requires all postal facilities with more than ten employees to have written Emergency Action Plans. For facilities with ten or fewer employees, the plan may be communicated verbally. The plans must include actions that management and employees are expected to take in the event of various foreseeable types of emergencies. These plans must be kept up to date and communicated to employees at least annually. Training is required for Emergency Evacuation Teams (EET) and Spill Response Team members. At least one emergency evacuation drill must be held annually, and other types of drills, e.g., spill response, should be held as necessary to maintain proficiency of spill response team members. Training for EET members and Spill Response Team members (HAZWOPER) is available through the National Center Employee Department.

Emergencies that affect the entire community require coordination with local emergency program managers. These emergencies may include severe weather, flooding, and terrorist activities. Local and state authorities have established emergency operation plans. Additionally, the federal government has emergency response plans. The federal plan was activated September 11 in New York City. The Federal Emergency Management Agency currently has the lead in civil defense matters, which includes response (search and rescue) and recovery initiatives. The FBI is the lead agency in terrorism incidents. Other federal agencies offer support as needed. However, all response efforts begin locally, so it is critical to establish coordination and communication with local emergency personnel.

Aviation Mail Security is currently providing operational HAZMAT training for employees at AMCs, AMFs, mail processing centers, international service centers, and retail acceptance points. These training modules outline HAZMAT awareness, acceptance, proper handling, and transporting procedures.

References useful in preparing and maintaining the Emergency Action Plans are:

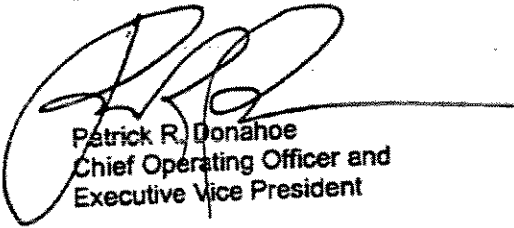
- ELM, Section 850
- MI EL-810-96-1, Response to Hazardous Materials Releases
- MI EL-860-1999-3, Emergency Response to Mail Allegedly Containing Anthrax
- MI EL-810-2000-2, Bloodborne Disease Exposure Control Plans
- MI EL-810-2001-1, Personal Protective Equipment and Respiratory Protection Programs
- MI EL-850-2001-2, Emergency Evacuation and Fire Prevention
- Safety Toolkit Resources Page

Talking Points


- America's postal employees have done an outstanding job of keeping the mail moving since September 11th. We have delivered more than 20 billion pieces of mail under extraordinary conditions.
- The Postal Service places the highest priority on the safety of its employees and customers and the security of the U.S. Mail. We are taking every possible measure to assure the safety for all.
- We are reminding employees to be vigilant in their efforts to identify suspicious mail. If they find a suspicious package or letter we are advising them to leave it alone, isolate it, and call for help. We recommend this same effort to all of our customers.
- We continue to have discussions with postal Union and Association leaders regarding the safety of employees. We have agreed to work together to continually educate employees concerning the safe and secure handling of the mail.
- We are responding to employee concerns by making gloves and masks available to those employees who actively handle the mail.
- We are working tirelessly to keep the mail moving and to keep our employees safe and secure.
- We offer the following advice to customers who receive a suspicious package or letter. Do not open the piece. Isolate it. Evaluate the immediate area. Call a postal Inspector to report that you have received a parcel in the mail that may contain biological or chemical substances.
- Be suspicious if you receive a mail piece from someone unfamiliar with you, it has no return address, it is lopsided or oddly shaped, marked with restrictive endorsements, or shows a city or state postmark that does not match the return address.
- All testing of postal employees for exposure to anthrax has been negative.
- We process and deliver 680 million pieces of mail per day to more than 128 million addresses. We have 800,000 employees working in more than 38,000 postal facilities.
- We have 800,000 employees and 2,000 postal inspectors who are continually being educated on the safety and sanctity of the mail. They are working extremely hard to make sure the mail is safe and viable for all customers.
- Until this week we have never experienced a real incident of anthrax being sent through the mail. Over the past several years we have received on average about 80 threats or hoaxes per year.
- We have briefed the Surgeon General's office on our actions and will brief the Office of Personnel Management along with the Human Resource Directors for all federal agencies.
- We are planning a nationwide mailing to every address in America that helps to educate everyone about the issue of biological threats through the mail. The easy to read post card will arrive in mailboxes within the next 10 days.

A sample safety talk titled Hazardous Material Spill and Leak Response, from the Safety Toolkit, is attached. Additional safety talks on the above topics are available in the Toolkit.

Please ensure that facilities within your respective span of management have developed and implemented Emergency Action Plans and that personnel training has been performed and documented. Stand-up talks covering the Emergency Action Plans should be presented. Questions concerning the Emergency Action Plans should be directed to Denise Richardson at 202/268-3686.



Patrick R. Donahoe
Chief Operating Officer and
Executive Vice President



Suzanne F. Medvidovich
Senior Vice President
Human Resources

Attachment

- The Postal Service is working with law enforcement and health care agencies regarding the discovery of anthrax spores in an isolated area of the Boca Raton post office.
- We have established a taskforce on hazardous biological and chemical materials that will include our unions, management associations, major mailers, and senior postal managers.
- Our Chief Postal Inspector is working with the mailing industry to strengthen the security of business mailrooms.
- We are working with Capital Hill police in establishing new procedures for handling all mail for congressional leaders.
- Now more than ever America is depending on us to keep the mail moving safely and securely.
- Everyone needs to mobilize common sense in dealing with this unfamiliar situation.
- Our Postal Inspection Service is working closely with other federal and local agencies to aggressively investigate every suspected biological incident.
- The mail is safe. People shouldn't stop using the mail because of these isolated incidents. The simple act of paying attention to incoming mail will go a long way in keeping it safe and viable.

October 2001

Mandatory Safety Talk on Anthrax

Anthrax is an acute disease caused by a spore-forming bacterium (*Bacillus anthracis*). Anthrax most commonly occurs in hoofed mammals (cattle and sheep) but can also infect humans. It is important to note however, that anthrax is not spread from person to person. Anthrax is most common in agricultural regions where it occurs in animals. These include South and Central America, Southern and Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and the Middle East. This disease rarely occurs in the United States, with most reports of animal infection occurring in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

Anthrax infection can occur in three ways: (1) through breaks/cuts in the skin, (2) inhalation of spores, and (3) ingestion. If the bacterium enters a cut or abrasion on the skin, an infection can result, which develops into a painless ulcer with a characteristic black area in the center. Initial symptoms from inhaled spores resemble a common cold, which may progress to severe breathing problems and shock, with death usually resulting within 1-2 days after onset of acute symptoms. Early intervention with antibiotics is the preferred treatment for inhalation exposure. The intestinal disease form of anthrax may follow the consumption of contaminated meat, and is characterized by an acute inflammation of the intestinal tract. Initial signs of nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting, fever are followed by abdominal pain, vomiting of blood, and severe diarrhea.

How likely is it that someone would receive anthrax or other terrorist-related biological agents in the mail? The Postal Service delivers approximately 208 billion pieces of mail per year, and presently we have not found any real incidents, only threats or hoaxes (no biological agent present).

During FY 1999 and FY 2000, there were approximately 178 anthrax threats received at courthouses, reproductive health service providers (clinics offering abortion services and/or counseling), churches, schools, and post offices. During FY 2001 we have had only approximately 60 threats or hoaxes which included anthrax, hoof and mouth disease, the Klingerman virus hoax and others.

Local, state, and Federal health and emergency program officials are prepared to deal with terrorist activities involving release of anthrax spores. The Postal Service is coordinating with these officials to ensure quick and effective response to any such activities.

The Postal Service is dedicated to protecting the safety and health of all employees as well as customers. Management Instruction EL-860-1999-3, *Emergency Response to Mail Allegedly Containing Anthrax*, provides emergency response procedures and management guidelines for incidents in which letters or parcels are received that allegedly contain anthrax. The remote, but real, possibility that anthrax will be introduced into the mail stream requires that the following procedures be strictly followed.

What constitutes a "suspicious parcel"? Some typical characteristics Postal Inspectors have detected over the years, which ought to trigger suspicion, include parcels that:

- are unexpected or from someone unfamiliar to you.
- are addressed to someone no longer with your organization or are otherwise outdated.
- have no return address, or have one that can't be verified as legitimate.
- are of unusual weight, given their size, or are lopsided or oddly shaped.
- are marked with restrictive endorsements, such as "Personal" or "Confidential."
- have protruding wires, strange odors or stains.
- show a city or state in the postmark that doesn't match the return address.

If you, as an employee, encounter a suspicious looking mail piece(s), do not touch it but report it to your supervisor/manager immediately.

Supervisors and Managers will immediately do the following:

1. Direct all employees away from the suspected mail piece(s) immediately.
2. Avoid further handling of the suspected mail piece(s), isolate it, and cordon off the immediate area (may utilize facility Spill and Leak Team to assist in this effort).
3. Call 911 immediately for HAZMAT Response Team.
4. Call your supervisor/manager or any member listed on the Crisis Management Plan/Emergency Action Plan.
5. Call Postal Inspectors.
6. Call the Health Unit.
7. Instruct employees thought to have handled the suspect mail to wash exposed skin with soap and water for three minutes and then rinse with water for one minute. These employees should remain in a safe place on postal premises until the Hazardous Material (HAZMAT) team arrives and employees are processed through the decontamination line.
8. After being decontaminated, employees may be interviewed by federal authorities (FBI) to determine the extent of the situation.
9. Invoke emergency action plan, including mechanical shutdowns (air handling equipment) and evacuation.
10. Call Postal Service Aviation Mail Security Office.
11. Call County Health Department.

HOW TO HANDLE ANTHRAX AND OTHER BIOLOGICAL AGENT THREATS

Many facilities in communities around the country have received anthrax threat letters. Most were empty envelopes; some have contained powdery substances. The purpose of these guidelines is to recommend procedures for handling such incidents.

DO NOT PANIC

1. Anthrax organisms can cause infection in the skin, gastrointestinal system, or the lungs. To do so the organism must be rubbed into abraded skin, swallowed, or inhaled as a fine, aerosolized mist. Disease can be prevented after exposure to the anthrax spores by early treatment with the appropriate antibiotics. Anthrax is not spread from one person to another person.

2. For anthrax to be effective as a covert agent, it must be aerosolized into very small particles. This is difficult to do, and requires a great deal of technical skill and special equipment. If these small particles are inhaled, life-threatening lung infection can occur, but prompt recognition and treatment are effective.

Suspicious unopened letter or package marked with threatening message i.e., "Anthrax:"

1. Do not shake or empty the contents of any suspicious envelope or package.
2. **PLACE** the envelope or package in a plastic bag or some other type of container to prevent leakage of contents.
3. If you do not have any container, then **COVER** the envelope or package with anything (e.g., clothing, paper, trash can, etc.) and do not remove this cover.
4. Then **LEAVE** the room and **CLOSE** the door, or section off the area to keep others away.
5. **WASH** your hands with soap and water to prevent spreading any powder to your face.
6. What to do next...
 - If you are at **HOME**, report the incident to local police.
 - If you are at **WORK**, report the incident to local police, and notify your building security official or an available supervisor.
7. **LIST** all people who were in the room or area when this suspicious letter or package was recognized. Give this list to both the local public health authorities and law enforcement officials for follow-up investigations and advice.

Envelope with powder and powder spills out onto surface:

1. **DO NOT** try to **CLEAN UP** the powder. **COVER** the spilled contents immediately with anything (e.g., clothing, paper, trash can, etc.) and do not remove this cover!
2. **LEAVE** the room and **CLOSE** the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering (i.e., keep others away).
3. **WASH** your hands with soap and water to prevent spreading any powder to your face.
4. What to do next...
 - If you are at **HOME**, then report the incident to local police.
 - If you are at **WORK**, then report the incident to local police, and notify your building security

official or an available supervisor.

5. REMOVE heavily contaminated clothing as soon as possible and place in a plastic bag, or some other container that can be sealed. This clothing bag should be given to the emergency responders for proper handling.
6. SHOWER with soap and water as soon as possible. Do not use bleach or other disinfectant on your skin.
7. If possible, list all people who were in the room or area, especially those who had actual contact with the powder. Give this list to both the local public health authorities so that proper instructions can be given for medical follow-up, and to law enforcement officials for further investigation.

Question of room contamination by aerosolization:

For example: small device triggered, warning that air-handling system is contaminated, or warning that a biological agent released in a public space.

1. Turn off local fans or ventilation units in the area.
2. LEAVE area immediately.
3. CLOSE the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering (i.e., keep others away).
4. What to do next...
 - If you are at HOME, then dial "911" to report the incident to local police and the local FBI field office.
 - If you are at WORK, then dial "911" to report the incident to local police and the local FBI field office, and notify your building security official or an available supervisor.
5. SHUT down air handling system in the building, if possible.
6. If possible, list all people who were in the room or area. Give this list to both the local public health authorities so that proper instructions can be given for medical follow-up, and to law enforcement officials for further investigation.

How to identify suspicious packages and letters:

Some characteristics of suspicious packages and letters include the following:

- Excessive postage
- Handwritten or poorly typed addresses
- Incorrect titles
- Title, but no name
- Misspellings of common words
- Oily stains, discoloration or odor
- No return address
- Excessive weight
- Lopsided or uneven envelope
- Protruding wires or aluminum foil
- Excessive security material such as masking tape, string, etc.
- Visual distractions
- Ticking sound
- Marked with restrictive endorsements, such as "Personal" or "Confidential"
- Shows a city or state in the postmark that does not match the return address

USPS NEWS TALK

USPS NEWS Talk for Postal Supervisors and Postmasters

Special Edition

Oct. 15, 2001

Gloves and masks: Let's talk about *your* safety.

Today's *USPS News Talk* contains a mandatory stand-up talk that addresses employee safeguards against potentially harmful chemical or biological substances in the mail.

Facility managers must immediately deliver the information in this stand-up talk to all USPS employees who handle the mail.

After you deliver the talk, the Facility Manager must sign the Certification sheet that accompanies today's special edition, indicating that all three stand-up talks, including Biological Substances, Anthrax and Emergency Action Plans, have been delivered to employees. If you have not delivered the previous stand-up talks, do so immediately.

Then forward the completed certification sheet to your District Manager, who will compile the certifications and send them to their area vice presidents. The AVPs will send them to the vice president, Employee Resource Management.

You also must supply gloves and filtering facemasks to employees who manually handle the mail and ask for them. The exception is if employees face risk of injury by wearing gloves because of their proximity to mechanized or automated equipment. An example would be locations with in-running nip points. Then, employees can't wear gloves.

Biological substances in the mail ***STAND-UP TALK***

The bottom line – employees who handle the mail and would like gloves or masks for anthrax protection will get them as long as it is safe and appropriate for them to be used. More on that in a minute.

But first, you're doing a great job. You have served our country well since the tragic events of Sept. 11. As an organization, the Postal Service continues to pull together to move the mail, which in turn keeps our country connected and our economy rolling.

On top of everything that happened last month, we now face another challenge. A challenge that is personal because it potentially threatens the health and well-being of employees who handle the mail. It is the threat of hazardous biological substances in the mail.

Continues next page

Management is meeting daily with representatives of our unions and management associations on the situation. Also, a high-level task force is being formed to take a fresh look at emergency management procedures, including handling hazardous biological and chemical materials. It will be made up of management, union, management association and major mailer representatives.

There has been one case of a letter postmarked in the United States containing anthrax. It was mailed in Trenton, NJ, on Sept. 18 and received by NBC News. The Florida and Carson City, Nevada, incidents have yet to be confirmed as having come through the U. S. mail.

The investigation continues. And it is very fluid. Events are happening quickly. We will update you as soon as we have additional facts. Anyone inside the Postal Service who may have been in contact with the letter mailed from Trenton will be identified, monitored and treated, if necessary.

Because of the letter, and news reports about anthrax threats, employees at post offices and processing plants across America have expressed their concern. Public health authorities say the risk to postal employees is very low. However, some employees have asked to use gloves and masks.

The Postmaster General says the Postal Service will provide gloves and masks to any employee who handles the mail. The exception is if employees face risk of injury by wearing gloves because of their proximity to mechanized or automated equipment. An example would be work locations with in-running nip points. Then, employees can't wear gloves. Employees who would like these protective tools should contact your immediate supervisor for details on how to obtain them *and when it is safe and appropriate to wear them.*

The greatest measure of protection we have is our own vigilance. Employees are asked to be on the lookout for suspicious packages and letters. If one is found, the employee should leave it alone, isolate it and call for help. The Inspection Service is taking every lead seriously and will work with other law enforcement agencies to keep all postal employees safe from terrorist threats.

Do not deliberately shake or empty the contents of any suspicious envelope or package. This is a change in policy from previous instructions to window clerks and other employees who handle the mail. We had been advising them to shake a parcel during acceptance to help identify loose liquids or other materials that could create a hazard during handling.

Only this portion of the procedure has been suspended. The other parts remain in effect. And they are important. It's crucial for window clerks to ask customers if packages contain anything liquid, fragile, perishable or potentially hazardous.

During routine handling, if you notice that a sealed envelope or package contains a loose sifting material, isolate it and call for assistance. In closing, there are four key points to remember to keep ourselves and the public safe.

- Take care of yourself. By doing that you will continue to be in a position to help the American people.

- Page 3 of 2
- Be alert and protect the mail. Keep a watchful eye on the mail and make sure postal facilities and equipment are secure.
 - Put everything into perspective. Don't let panic defeat us. Let common sense guide you through the workday.
 - Keep the mail moving. The American public expects us to keep them connected, safely. By being vigilant, we should have no problem living up to their expectations.

Next USPS NEWS Talk: Wednesday, Oct. 17.



October 16, 2001

TO: DISTRICT MANAGERS
PLANT MANAGERS
MANAGERS, MAINTENANCE

Subject: Cleaning Policy Clarification Due to Anthrax Incidents

We have had numerous questions as to how mail processing equipment is to be cleaned as a result of the recent anthrax incidents. For normal cleaning situations (i.e. no unknown hazardous materials involved), our policy is to first use a vacuum to clean up dust; then, if necessary, blow out the specific areas of the machine inaccessible by vacuum with air pressure regulated to less than 30 psi. Employees blowing out machines should wear eye protection and may wear a filtering facepiece (FFP) and nitrile gloves if they desire. Indiscriminate use of compressed air for any other cleaning, e.g. blowing off tops of equipment, floors, etc. is prohibited. For general custodial cleaning, employees may wear a FFP and nitrile gloves if they desire.

Where there is reason to suspect that a machine or area has been contaminated with an unknown substance cordon off the area, and follow the local emergency action plan. We must rely on the advice of trained emergency responders on how to proceed with cleaning equipment or areas in the event of a suspected or confirmed contamination incident. Employees who may have contacted the unknown substance should wash their hands or other skin areas with soap and water. This is the best protection against any hazardous material release, including anthrax.

The Postal Service policy on the use of gloves and filtering facepieces is contained in the Management Instruction, EL-810-2001-1 and is still applicable.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Gerard Bohan".

J. Gerard Bohan
Manager,
Maintenance Policies and Programs

cc: Thomas G. Day, Vice President, Engineering
Managers, Operations Support, Areas
Managers, In-Plant Support, Areas
Managers, Maintenance Support, Areas
Rex Gallaher, MTSC
Walter F. O'Tormey, In-Plant Operations
Samuel Pulcrano, Safety Performance Management
Robert Brant, Safety Performance Management
Frank Lundblad, Safety Performance Management
Michael Spates, Delivery


cc: HR Staff
M

Management Instruction

Emergency Response to Mail Allegedly Containing Anthrax

This instruction provides emergency response procedures and management guidelines for incidents in which letters or parcels are received that allegedly contain anthrax, a biologically hazardous material.

Date	October 8, 1999
Effective	Immediately
Number	EL-860-1999-3
Obsoletes	None
Unit	Safety and Health


Yvonne D. Maguire
Vice President
Human Resources

Background

Recent Incidents

In 1998 and 1999 there have been several instances where postal customers have reported receiving letters or parcels that allegedly contained a specific biologically hazardous material, anthrax. Even though hoaxes, such mailings, a form of bioterrorism that is unsettling to employees and to the community, fall in the category of "undeclared prohibited mailings." The possibility that the mailings do contain hazardous materials cannot be ignored, however, and such mailings should be treated with all caution.

Anthrax

Anthrax is an acute infectious disease caused by *bacillus anthracis*. Spores enter the body through open wounds, cuts, or mucous membranes (mouth, nose) or are inhaled or ingested. Humans usually get the disease by coming into contact with spores of infected animals (cattle, sheep, goats) or their products. It is probably not transmitted from person to person, and a person with anthrax is not contagious. *Bacillus anthracis* spores can cause disease in 2 to 60 days.

Individuals who have been identified as having had an exposure to anthrax may be treated by medication.

CONTENTS

Background	1
Recent Incidents	1
Anthrax	1
Policy	2
General	2
Responsibilities	2
Postal Service Management	2
Contractors and Suppliers	3
Emergency Response Procedures	3

MIDWEST AREA OFFICE
RECEIVED
NOV 01 1999
MANAGER
HUMAN RESOURCES

Policy

General

The Postal Service is committed to providing a safe and healthful work environment for its employees. Suspected bioterrorism threats or suspicious incidents require prompt action by health, safety, law enforcement, and laboratory personnel. Coordination and communication are essential to protect first responders and employees.

Responsibilities

Postal Service Management

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has jurisdiction for bioterrorism response, and the Inspection Service coordinates with the FBI. It is management's responsibility to minimize potential exposures through quick *isolation and evacuation* until emergency response and law enforcement can arrive and take control of the incident.

Managers must ensure the following:

1. All employees, through safety talks, hazardous materials first-responder training, and emergency action plan training, must be instructed on initial actions to take if there has been a suspected exposure to anthrax (or other biologically hazardous material).
2. Emergency action plans, crisis management plans, hazardous materials spills response instructions, medical service standing orders, and other related standard operating procedures must be modified to incorporate appropriate guidance.

Crisis management plans must be revised to do the following:

- a. Include appropriate actions to ensure initial coordination with the FBI and outside responders through the Inspection Service.
- b. Detail other initial actions to isolate and contain potential contamination and deal with potentially exposed employees.
- c. Cover subsequent actions, including proper medical treatment (using current Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines), employee counseling, and media liaison.

The emergency action plan must include the telephone numbers of the initial and secondary contacts.

Contractors and Suppliers

Contractors and suppliers who handle and transport mail and function outside of postal facilities must have in place and be able to demonstrate proficiency and compliance with state required and approved hazardous cargo, bloodborne pathogen, and related hazard response protocols, including international airport response procedures.

Any incident that falls within these requirements must be reported to the Postal Service immediately upon notification of the hazard.

Emergency Response Procedures

Employees Who Suspect Mail Is Contaminated

- 1> Do not handle the mailpiece or package suspected of contamination.
- 2> Notify the postal supervisor, who will immediately contact the facility safety office or other designated person.
- 3> Make sure that damaged or suspicious packages are isolated and the immediate area cordoned off.

Individuals Who May Have Touched a Contaminated Mailpiece

- >> Wash your hands and wait for further instruction from management and, ultimately, outside emergency response experts.

Internal Postal Spill and Leak Teams

- >> Do *not* handle suspect packages, clean areas, or take any response action other than to retreat, isolate, and notify management in accordance with the facility standard operating procedures.

Facility Management

- 1> Alert employees to stay in evacuation areas and not leave postal property so that they can receive necessary information and medical follow-up if appropriate.

- 2> Invoke the emergency action plan, including the following:
- a. Effecting mechanical shutdowns (including air handling equipment), isolation, and evacuation.
 - b. Notifying the Inspection Service.
 - c. Notifying Postal Service Aviation Mail Security Office.
 - d. Notifying postal and local community emergency responders, which may include the health department, fire department, or local law enforcement.

Mandatory Safety Talk- Hand Protection

Recent events have necessitated the need to re-emphasize USPS policy regarding the use of gloves and washing of hands with soap and water.

The hand is the part of the body most often injured on the job and these injuries are preventable. The work environment may contain substances capable of causing chemical, mechanical or physical injuries to the skin

The USPS has furnished nitrile gloves for employees who wish to use them and we encourage their use.

Therefore, wear your gloves, and wash your hands with soap water every two hours during your tour, and other times as appropriate.

In addition, we are providing N-95 filter face pieces for those employees who process mail on the work room floor, if you wish to use them.

Employees are once again urged to be aware regarding suspicious mail and to immediately report any illness to your immediate supervisor.

SPulcrano	_____
DCumbo	_____
JForbes	_____
RPerater	_____

VICE PRESIDENTS, AREA OPERATIONS
DISTRICT MANAGERS
SENIOR PLANT MANAGERS

SUBJECT: Personal Protective Equipment Purchases

Headquarters is purchasing nitrile gloves and N95 filtering face pieces for all the processing and distribution centers in the country. These items will be shipped directly from the manufacturers to your plants. Each box of the N95 face pieces provides instructions for its use. Attached is a mandatory safety talk on hand protection.

Please ensure that your employees who desire these added precautions be given this personal protective equipment to use, as needed.

Patrick R. Donahoe
Chief Operating Officer and
Executive Vice President

Suzanne F. Medvidovich
Senior Vice President
Human Resources

Attachment

ERM:SPulcrano:dc:4261.10.23.01

SPulcrano	_____
DCumbo	_____
JForbes	_____
RPerater	_____

Certification

I certify that I have delivered the following stand-up talks to the employees that I supervise:

1. Hand Protection

_____ Date talk delivered

_____ Location

The Facility Manager must submit this signed completed document to the District Manager. The District Manager will forward it to the Area Vice President who will send the documentation to the vice president, Employee Resource Management.

_____ Facility Manager

USPS NEWS TALK

USPS NEWS Talk for Postal Supervisors and Postmasters

Special Edition

Oct. 19, 2001

Decision trees, administrative issues and other guidance on safety

The following is a mandatory stand-up talk that must be read to your employees.

1. Instruction on Decision Trees for Anthrax-Related Emergencies

Three decision trees are attached to today's *Talk, Special Edition*. They include:

- Possible room or area contamination by airborne gas.
- Open mailpiece with suspicious powder spilling onto surface.
- Discovery of suspicious unopened/sealed envelope or parcel.

Managers are required to discuss the three decision trees in the context of local emergency action plans and resources. Make copies of the scenarios and distribute them before the talk so that employees can make notes. These scenarios and actions are based on Centers for Disease Control Advisories. Technical questions should be referred to the local safety or medical office.

The decision trees provide guidance on immediate actions to take in the event of three scenarios involving the potential release of anthrax spores (or similar bioterrorist incidents). They have been coordinated with the Inspection Service.

Please also make it clear to employees that overreaction to deposits of various powders and dusts not associated with suspicious mail are overwhelming emergency response resources. Employees who come upon a powder-like deposit that is **not** from an envelope or package should not assume the worst.

Spills of make-up, powdered sugar, soap powder, talcum and many other powders occur every day at work, in public places and at home. At work, these spills occur in locker rooms, bathrooms, breakrooms, offices and even on the workroom floor. So be alert for suspicious mail, but let's not overreact to spills of products we all use every day.

2. Guidance for Postal Service Hazmat First Responders

The current problem with anthrax hoaxes and actual terrorist activities has created a difficult situation for first responders to incidental spills and leaks of hazardous materials.

Continues next page

First Responders in the postal system are only trained and authorized to deal with minor spills and leaks of hazardous materials, usually consumer commodity-type substances. They are not expected to clean up or take other actions when confronted with an emergency spill or release of a dangerous biological substance.

A known or suspected release of anthrax spores is an emergency. Clear guidelines for what to do have already been issued and reiterated many times. This guidance is being posted on the Safety Toolkit Resources web page at:
http://safetytoolkit.usps.gov/hr_dev/tk1_3/Home_Pg/safety_and_health.htm.

Clearly, most spills and leaks in the mail will continue to be of the incidental variety and will not involve emergency releases of hazardous materials, or anthrax spores.

Therefore, First Responders can follow established procedures, based on their training, when an incidental release is certain. The following guidelines should be used to determine if a release is incidental or a non-anthrax-related emergency:

POWDERS AND SIMILAR MATERIALS:

- If the initial report involves the release of a powder-like substance *from a mail piece* isolate the area immediately shut down the ventilation system. Also shut down any processing equipment or machinery that may have processed or damaged the mailpiece. The goal is to avoid spreading the contamination in the air.
- Remove employees from the immediate area. Ask the person who discovered the release if there was any label or marking that would identify the spilled material. Commercially packaged products such as soup mixes or soap powder obviously wouldn't be hazardous.
- If possible identify the mailer or addressee and determine what was mailed. This should be done without disturbing the parcel or immediate surroundings (use binoculars for example). If it can be confirmed that the mailing was innocent, proceed with normal cleanup procedures. **If the nature of the spilled powder cannot be confirmed within a short time, initiate emergency procedures.**
- Discovery of loose powders and similar materials not directly associated with mail – in a swing room, locker room or aisles, for example – are unlikely to be hazardous. Everything from donut powdered sugar to spilled makeup has caused unnecessary alarm, disruption to operations and wasted emergency resources.
- Unless there is compelling evidence to the contrary, these materials should be cleaned up with standard procedures. As a precaution, the materials can be soaked in a 1-10-bleach solution for 10 minutes, which would kill any organisms.

LIQUIDS:

- There is no evidence of any mailing with intent to cause harm that involves biological or chemical hazards in liquid form. If a package is leaking a liquid, follow normal procedures for determining if the release is incidental and can be cleaned up by postal First Responders, or is an emergency requiring outside response.

SMOKE, FUMES, and VAPORS:

- Any package releasing visible smoke, fumes or irritating vapors or gases is considered an emergency under postal hazmat policy. The immediate area should be evacuated and outside help called.

Administrative Issues

In a crisis climate, local emergency responders may limit response runs to postal facilities unless an anthrax release is suspected. Other emergencies that require outside response may necessitate use of contract hazmat resources. Safety and environmental professionals should begin to identify those resources in the event public responders are not available.

Next USPS NEWS Talk: Wednesday, Oct. 24. Copy due Friday, Oct. 19.

Discovery of a suspicious *unopened/sealed* envelope or parcel

Some indicators: threatening message, loose sifting material, excessive postage, handwritten or poorly typed address, stains, odors, no return address, lopsided or uneven envelope, excessive weight.

Do not handle further.
Do not shake or empty contents.
Isolate the package without further contact.
Leave the area and prevent others from entering.
Wash hands with soap and water.

Small Office

- Contact supervisor if available.
- Supervisor or employee contacts:
 - Local police/hazmat
 - Inspection Service
 - Postmaster.
 - Servicing safety office.
- All building occupants should remain in a place of refuge away from the mailpiece and await emergency responders.

Large Office or Plant

- Contact immediate supervisor who:
- Initiates emergency action plan as appropriate to include:
 - cordon off area, room
 - equipment shut down,
 - direct others away
 - contact designated personnel.
- Designated Emergency Action Plan personnel do this:
 - Incidental hazmat responders examine scene, attempt to determine if emergency exists, and take defensive actions (tape off area, HVAC shutdown, etc.)
 - Call Inspection Service and identified local resources (police, hazmat team).
 - Evacuation teams keep personnel in places of refuge and await emergency responders

Notes

(Phone numbers, local contacts, instructions, etc.)

An Open Mailpiece with Suspicious Powder Spilling Onto Surface

Any powder or granulated substance is suspicious at this time, *unless* the contents are readily identified. For example, a torn package of dried soup, or other commercial foodstuffs and commercially packaged powders.

Do not try to clean up the powder.

Do not do anything to create a dust cloud.

If possible gently cover the spill with anything (e.g. clothing, paper, trash can, and leave the area.

Prevent others from entering and wash hands with soap and water.

Small Office

- Contact supervisor if available.
- Supervisor or employee contacts:
 - Local police/hazmat.
 - Inspection Service.
 - Postmaster.
 - Servicing safety office.
- All building occupants should remain in a place of refuge away from the mailpiece and await emergency responders.
- At direction of emergency responders:
 - Remove contaminated clothing as soon as possible and place in a plastic bag or other sealed container.
 - Shower as soon as possible.
- List all people who were in the immediate area or room. Give this list to the IS and local responders.

Large Office or Plant

- Contact immediate supervisor who:
 - Initiates emergency action plan as appropriate.
 - cordon off area.
 - shut down equipment.
 - keep others away.
 - Contact designated personnel.
- Emergency Action Plan designated personnel will do this:
 - Postal incidental hazmat responders examine scene, attempt to determine if emergency exists and take defensive actions (tape off area, ventilation system shutdown, etc.).
 - Call Inspection Service and identified local resources (police, hazmat team).
 - Evacuation teams keep personnel in places of refuge and await emergency responders.
 - Ensure contaminated persons wash hands with soap and water.
- At direction of emergency responders:
 - Remove contaminated clothing as soon as possible and place in a plastic bag or other sealed container.
 - Shower as soon as possible.
 - List all people who were in the immediate area or room. Give this list to the IS and local responders.

Notes

(Phone numbers, contacts, local instructions, etc.)

Possible Room or Area Contamination by Airborne Gas*

A small aerosol device might be triggered or sprayed, a warning that the ventilation system may become contaminated, or that a biological agent has been released in a public space.

* Dust, fumes or vapors are introduced in to the air with criminal or malicious intent.

Turn off any local fans or ventilation units in the area.
Leave the area and close doors.
Make sure no one enters the area.

Small Office

- Contact supervisor if available.
- Supervisor or employee contacts:
 - Local police/hazmat.
 - Inspection Service
 - Postmaster.
 - Servicing safety office.
- All building occupants should remain in a place of refuge outside of the building and wait for emergency responders. Stay upwind of the building.
- Wait for direction from emergency responders on decontamination, etc.
- List all people who were in the immediate area or room. Give this list to the IS and local responders.

Large Office or Plant

- Contact immediate supervisor who:
 - Initiates emergency action plan as appropriate:
 - cordons off area, room
 - shuts down equipment
 - keeps others away.
 - contacts designated personnel.
- Emergency Action Plan designated person will do this:
 - Postal incident hazmat responders examine scene, attempt to determine if an emergency exists, and take defensive actions (tape off area, ventilation system shutdown, etc.).
 - Call Inspection Service and identified local resources (police, hazmat team).
 - Evacuation teams keep personnel outside the building in designated places of refuge (upwind) and await emergency responders.
 - Wait for further directions on decontamination from emergency responders.
 - List all people who were in the immediate area or room. Give this list to the IS and local responders.

Notes

(Phone numbers, local contacts, instructions, etc.)