Federal Mail Education Forum
Postal Inspector Ajay Lall
OUR MISSION

We support and protect the U.S. Postal Service, its employees, infrastructure, and customers; enforce the laws that defend the nation’s mail system from illegal or dangerous use; and ensure public trust in the mail.

SECURITY:
It Comes With the Stamp!

WE ARE AMERICA'S MOST TRUSTED GOVERNMENT AGENCY
October 2001
Resulted in the deaths of five people
Led to the creation of the Dangerous Mail Investigations program
Inspectors complete 140 hours of classroom training in hazardous mail/incident response

- Over 400 nationwide
- Fully equipped and comparable to many HAZMAT teams
- Protect customers/employees
- Ensure continued USPS operations
DANGEROUS MAIL INVESTIGATIONS
FIELD SCREENING

C – Chemical
B – Biological
R – Radiological
N – Nuclear
E - Explosive
DANGEROUS MAIL INVESTIGATIONS
TYPES OF RESPONSES

• Suspicious Powders - Powders leaking from mail pieces or in the mail stream. PPE is Half-Mask, eye protection and gloves.

• Suspicious Liquids – Liquids leaking from mail pieces or in the mail stream. PPE is Full-Face Mask and gloves.

• Suspicious Items – Items placed or mailed. Time, distance and shielding are used as protective measures.

• BioHazard Detection System (BDS) – Evidence collection and forensic sampling.
DANGEROUS MAIL INVESTIGATIONS
INCIDENT RESPONSES SINCE 2005

Restricted, Non-Mailable, Contraband
Suspicious Substances
Suspicious Items
DANGEROUS MAIL INVESTIGATIONS
LUDLUM & MULTIRAE

• Detects Alpha, Beta, and Gamma radiation.

• Monitors the environment for Volatile Organic Compounds, oxygen, toxic and combustible gases.
Measures the presence or absence of protein in a sample. The presence of protein indicates the possibility a biological agent may be present and further testing is necessary.

Detects the presence of suspicious concentrations of harmful microbes and toxins including Botulinum, Plague, Anthrax and Ricin.
DANGEROUS MAIL INVESTIGATIONS
HAZMATID 360

Classifies over 9,000 substances including:

- Powders
- Liquids
- Common chemicals
- Pesticides
DANGEROUS MAIL INVESTIGATIONS

PORTABLE X-RAY EQUIPMENT

Used to quickly screen suspicious mailed and placed items for the presence of explosive devices.
MAIL CENTER SECURITY
PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS

• Current threats
• USPIS recommendations
• Characteristics of suspicious packages and mail
• Recent incidents
MAIL CENTER SECURITY
CURRENT THREATS

- Use of the shipping sector to convey attacks
- Domestic threats
- Isolated criminal incidents
WHAT YOU CAN DO

USPIS RECOMMENDATIONS

• Conduct awareness training for suspicious items and substances
• Develop response protocols
• Train regularly on response protocols
CHARACTERISTICS OF SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES AND MAIL

SUSPICIOUS ITEMS

- Mailed
  - Has been handled
- Placed
  - Has not been handled
  - NEVER MOVE
Characteristics of Suspicious Packages and Mail

Suspicious Powders

Threats may arrive in written form or contain one of these substances (hoax, actual):

- Chemical
- Biological
- Radiological
CHARACTERISTICS OF SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES AND MAIL

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

• Poster 84
• Developed in conjunction with DHS, FBI and ATF
• Highlights suspicious characteristics of packages and mail
SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES AND MAIL

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Bulky, rigid, lopsided or unusual shape
- Strange odor
- Excessive postage
- No designated recipient
- Incorrect titles of intended recipients
- Title with no name associated
- Misspellings of names or common words in address
- Oily stains or discoloration
- Leaking powder or liquid
- No sender name or return address
SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES AND MAIL
WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Excessive weight
- Uneven envelope
- Protruding wires, foil, or metal
- Unusual markings or instructions
- Threatening language
- International mail or package delivery
- Restrictive handling instructions (i.e. confidential, personal)
- Handwritten or poorly typed addresses
- Excessive securing material (i.e. masking tape, string)
- Other characteristics based on mail room security training
Polling Question

Which of the following are the best characteristics of a suspicious package requiring immediate action?

A. Strange odor, leaking powder, misspelling of names in the address;

B. No designated recipient, duct tape on the corners of the package, foreign handwriting;

C. Uneven envelope, marked “personal” to a staff employee, Sesame Street as the return address; or

D. All of the above.
SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES AND MAIL
DEVELOP A RESPONSE PLAN

• Check for signs of immediate danger
• If it’s safe to do so, obtain addressee info
• Cordon off the area
• Follow your response plan
MISSISSIPPI RICIN MAILINGS

- Three confirmed letters
  - U.S. Senator
  - Mississippi State Judge
  - POTUS
- J. Everett Dutschke indicted in May 2013
- Sentenced to 25 years in prison
DANGEROUS MAIL INVESTIGATIONS
RECENT INCIDENTS

SPOKANE, WA RICIN MAILINGS

- Five confirmed letters
  - U.S. Post Office (Spokane)
  - Federal Judge (Spokane)
  - Fairchild AFB (Spokane)
  - POTUS
  - CIA
- Matthew Ryan Buquet indicted in May 2013
NEW BOSTON, TX RICIN MAILINGS

- Three confirmed letters
  - Mayor Bloomberg
  - Raben Group (DC)
  - POTUS
- Shannon Richardson indicted in 2013
- Sentenced to 18 years in prison
DANGEROUS MAIL INVESTIGATIONS
RECENT INCIDENTS

SHERIFF JOE ARPAIO MAILED DEVICE

- Discovered by Letter Carrier April 2013
- Contained device consisting of smokeless powder, wires, power source, initiator, and switch
- Gregory Shrader found guilty following jury trial in September 2014
- Sentenced to 7 years in prison
DANGEROUS MAIL INVESTIGATIONS
RECENT INCIDENTS

MARYLAND INCENDIARY PARCELS

- Three devices
  - DHS Secretary
  - Maryland Governor
  - MDOT
- Two parcels activated during screening
- One activated during handling at a USPS processing plant
SCENARIO – NUMBER ONE

Buzzing/Ticking Package Found on Workroom Floor

• A workroom employee notices a package making a ticking sound.

• The package has a return address from a kitchen supply company.

• There are no other suspicious indicators present on the exterior of the package.
Polling Question

Which of the following are the best action(s) to take if you respond to this event?

A. Immediately call 911 and evacuate the building;

B. Cordon off the immediate area;

C. Attempt to contact the sender to determine the contents; or

D. Put the package back into the system for processing and delivery.
An administrative assistant for a corporate executive was opening the mail addressed to her boss.

When she opened a business letter with a return address of a local environmental group, white powder spilled from the envelope.

A threatening note inside the envelope stated: “Stop destroying the world with your corporate greed. This is ricin. You will be dead tomorrow.”
Polling Question

Which of the following aren’t the appropriate actions to take if you respond to this incident?

A. Check to see if the employee is showing any medical systems;

B. Move the letter into the hallway for emergency responders to inspect;

C. Leave the letter where found and have the employee wash her hands; or

D. Obtain a description of the letter, sender/address information and contact first responders and/or U.S. Postal Inspectors for guidance.
SCENARIO – NUMBER THREE

UPS Parcel Received in Mail with Threatening Language

• Mail room personnel are preparing packages for delivery in the corporate offices.

• A UPS box is discovered with this handwritten statement: “Stop helping drug companies experiment on animals – see what you will get.”
Polling Question

What action is an appropriate response to this incident?

A. Contact local UPS and tell them to retrieve the item;

B. Call the fire department’s hazardous materials team;

C. Take a photo of the parcel that includes address information, annotations and other markings for investigation; or

D. Forward the item to the dangerous goods unit for evaluation.
SCENARIO – NUMBER FOUR

DHL Parcel with Characteristics of a Package Bomb

• A DHL parcel is delivered to the mail room operations.

• The mail room supervisor is called to check an international parcel that is heavily taped, addressed to the company “Director.”

• The box is misshaped, lopsided and has annotations written in a foreign language.
Polling Question

What actions are an appropriate response to this incident?

A. Cordon off the immediate area;

B. Move the parcel out of the building and into the parking lot;

C. Open the parcel with minimal contact to the contents; or

D. Take a photo of the parcel that includes the address information, annotations and other markings.
SCENARIO – NUMBER FIVE

Package X-rayed in Mail Room Operation with Images of Possible Explosive Device

• A package dropped off by a local courier company and addressed to a corporate staff director is X-rayed as part of the mail acceptance protocol.

• Security reviews the X-ray image and determines it shows the characteristics of a possible package bomb.
Polling Question

What actions aren’t an appropriate response to this event?

A. Remove the parcel from the x-ray machine and segregate it from the other packages in the mail room;

B. Evacuate the immediate area and call 911;

C. Do not touch or move the item, leave it in place; or

D. Follow the emergency response plan for a suspected explosive device.
Want to learn more?
Contact us

U.S. Postal Inspectors Help Businesses
Whether you’re a ‘mom & pop shop’ or major mailer—we work for you!

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