

Protect



Yourself

Handling Suspicious Mail at State Offices and State Facilities

All staff involved in handling, delivering, and opening mail should be aware of the following guidelines for handling suspicious packages or envelopes at your respective agency. It is extremely important to remain calm and follow the steps listed below when suspicious materials are encountered. The steps outlined below address potential explosives and potential biological or chemical threats:

1. Handle with care. Don't shake it or bump it.
2. Isolate the item and look for indicators - Excessive postage, foreign postmark, misspelled words, incorrect title, no return address, restrictive markings (personal or confidential), strange odors, oily stains, discoloration, crystallization on envelope, excess tape, or protruding wires.
3. Don't open, smell, or taste it.
4. If indicators are present, leave the item alone and isolate the work area to prevent further possible contamination. Treat the area like a crime scene.
5. Call the local highway Patrol Post or local police.
6. All personnel who handled the suspect item should wash their hands with soap and warm water.

If you have opened an item and identified a threat (bomb material or suspicious powder) take immediate steps to limit further exposure or risk:

Bomb

- Follow bomb threat protocols.
- Evacuate the area.
- Notify Police/Fire/Highway Patrol

Read U.S. Postal Service Advice

Responding law enforcement authorities will treat incidents as criminal investigations. Investigators may collect clothing, samples of the suspicious substance, and the original envelope or box. Investigators and Facility Administrators will work in consultation with local health departments and local fire departments in determining when to release work areas for use and how to decontaminate work areas that may have been exposed.

Please notify your local Ohio State Highway Patrol Post or your Police Department if you are involved in an incident. Keep the following telephone numbers at hand:

Highway Patrol Post _____
Police Department _____
Fire Department _____
County Health Dept. _____



Further information on the nature of biological threats can be obtained from the Ohio Department of Health Web site at <http://www.odh.state.oh.us>