

# Security SpotLight

## An Informational Guide for Security Clients

### Features of Suspect Mail

- Excessive postage, no postage, or non-canceled postage.
- Return address missing or fictitious.
- Misspelled names, titles, or locations.
- Unexpected mail from foreign countries.
- Suspicious or threatening messages written on packages.
- Postmark differs from return address.
- Distorted writing or cut-and-paste letters.
- Excessive use of tape, strings, or other wrapping.
- Packages marked "Fragile: Handle with Care," "Rush: Do Not Delay," "Personal" or "Confidential."
- Rigid, uneven, irregular, or lopsided packages.
- Packages discolored, oily or with an unusual odor.
- Packages with soft spots, bulges, or excessive weight.
- Protruding wires or aluminum foil.

Integrity / Vigilance  
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## Detecting Suspicious Packages

**Suspicious packages could be delivered anywhere, so it is good to keep the Securitas core values of Integrity, Vigilance and Helpfulness in mind.**

Being vigilant means you are watchful and prepared to respond to incidents. Although the likelihood of receiving a life-threatening package is remote, when encountered they can result in death, injury and/or destruction of property. All employees should understand your mail security procedures. This helps instill confidence in the safety of letters or packages delivered to their desks.

### Handle and Process Mail Safely

Screen mail and packages for signs of tampering when they arrive at your mailroom for sorting. Mailroom staff are the ones who usually perform the screening, as they are more likely to notice a suspicious item.

Prominently display a list of suspicious letter and package indicators in your mailroom and provide a copy of the list to all staff to ensure their familiarity with it. The Postal Inspection Service's [Poster 84, Suspicious Mail or Packages](#), illustrates key characteristics of these types of mail items.

### Staff Training

Employees must be aware of their surroundings and the mail they handle. Training specific to the handling of suspicious packages encourages a culture of security awareness.

Your training program should address these concerns:

- Basic security procedures.
- Recognition and reporting of suspicious letters or packages.
- Proper use of personal-protection equipment.
- Response protocols for a chemical, biological, radiological, or bomb threat.

(continued)



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## Receiving Suspect Packages

- **Remain calm.**
- **Do not open the package or letter.**
- **Do not shake or empty the contents of a suspicious package or envelope.**
- **Do not carry the package or envelope, show it to others or allow others to examine it.**
- **Put the package or envelope on a stable surface; do not sniff, touch, taste, or look closely at it or any contents that may have spilled.**
- **Do not touch your eyes, nose or other body parts.**
- **Shut off window air conditioning units and fans.**
- **Isolate the package and secure the room by shutting all doors and windows.**
- **Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water.**
- **Report to supervisor and call 911.**
- **Advise fellow co-workers to avoid the area.**
- **Ensure that all persons who have touched the letter wash their hands with soap and water.**
- **Make a list of all persons who touched the letter or package and who were in the area when the letter was opened.**

## Handling Suspicious Mail

- Examine unopened items and look for suspicious features.
- Handle incoming mail in a designated separate mailroom.
- Wash your hands after mail is opened.
- Restrict mailroom access to authorized persons.

If you're not expecting a letter or package, exercise caution. Check the return address. If you don't recognize it, then follow your company procedures. Don't open the mailpiece until it's been proven harmless.

## Letter or package bombs

Letter or package bombs can be designed for mailing in many shapes and sizes. Even letter-size mail or flats can contain dangerous substances. Revenge or intimidation are generally the motivations that most often triggers a letter or package bomb, or a bomb threat. The Postal Inspection Service can guide you in establishing a secure mail center and detecting letter and package bombs. Do the following as a minimum:

- Establish a letter and package bomb-screening program.

- Determine if your business or any employee is a potential target.
- Appoint a mail center security coordinator and an alternate to be responsible for your screening plan and to ensure compliance.
- Establish lines of communication between the mail center security coordinator, management, and the security office.
- Develop screening procedures for all incoming letter and package deliveries. Train employees in the procedures.
- Develop procedures for handling suspicious and dangerous items.
- Develop procedures for confirming the contents of suspicious letters and packages identified through screening.
- Establish procedures for isolating suspicious letters and packages.

## For more information

[Department of Homeland Security](#)

[US Postal Service](#)

Guidance on suspected chemical, biological, or radiological contamination from the [Centers for Disease Control](#)

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For more information on this and other security related topics, visit the SCIS Safety Awareness Knowledge Center at <http://www.scisusa.com/knowledge-center/>