



DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

BILL GRAVES
Governor

JOYCE H. GLASSCOCK
Acting Secretary
of Administration
1000 SW Jackson, Suite 500
Topeka, KS 66612
(785) 296-3011
FAX (785) 296-2702

October 30, 2001

MEMO FOR: ALL AGENCY HEADS AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGERS

FROM : SECRETARY OF ADMINISTRATION JOYCE GLASSCOCK
SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT CLYDE GRAEBER
SUPERINTENDANT OF HIGHWAY PATROL COL. DON BROWNLEE

RE: *Guidelines for Handling Incoming Mail*

Due to recent concerns regarding the anthrax virus, we are providing your agency with guidelines for how to identify and respond to suspicious mail.

Given the potential danger that mail handling equipment could present should it encounter mail carrying biological contaminants, we would also ask you to pay special attention to mechanical mail opening equipment that uses air pressure or a vacuum on incoming mail, or compaction devices that squeeze (incoming) mail in order to process or bundle it.

After reviewing the attached material and the special concern noted above, you or your staff may be interested in more information or training. The Department of Administration has agreed to coordinate training regarding the anthrax virus, procedures for dealing with suspicious mail, or mail equipment and handling. Inquiries on these subjects may be directed to Deann Tiede with the Office of the Secretary of Administration at 296-3011.

RECEIVED

NOV 02 2001

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

KDHE Division of Health

Division Procedure Guide for Responding to the Receipt of Envelopes or Packages of Suspicious or Unknown Origin

Many facilities in communities around the country are dealing with concerns about bioterrorism threat letters and suspicious envelopes or packages, with particular concerns about anthrax. The purpose of these guidelines is to recommend procedures for handling packages of concern.

Guideline Number 1: Don't Overreact.

Anthrax can cause illness in several ways: skin infection, gastrointestinal infection, or inhalation (lung) infection. To cause illness, the organism must be rubbed into skin that is cut or abraded, swallowed, or inhaled as a fine mist. It is not contagious from one person to another; in other words, you can't "catch it" from someone else. Soap kills anthrax on the skin. All forms of anthrax are generally treatable with antibiotics.

For anthrax to cause lung infection, it must be aerosolized (that is, spread in the air) in very small particles (about 1/10,000th of an inch, smaller than a red blood cell). Producing particles this small is very difficult, and usually requires a great deal of technical skill and special equipment. When handling or opening mail, attention to the procedures below should provide ample protection against anthrax infection. In the event an exposure does occur, it is important to obtain medical attention so antibiotics can be started promptly.

Anthrax cannot be aerosolized through the simple act of opening an envelope or package containing powder. In theory, if someone opening an envelope or package with powder deliberately inhales the powder, a lung infection could result.

Guideline Number 2: Use Common Sense with Unsolicited or Suspicious Packages; It is never wise to smell or sniff substances of unknown origin.

On the next two pages, there are some step-by-step procedures to follow in various situations:

UNOPENED LETTER OR PACKAGE, OR LETTER THAT APPEARS EMPTY - NO THREAT MESSAGE OR VISIBLE POWDER:

If you receive a letter, package, or other item that is not accompanied by a threat and not leaking powder, the risk of anthrax or harm from another biological agent is small. If you receive a package that concerns you that has no threat attached and no leaking powder, talk it over with your supervisor and State Capitol Police at 296-3420 (if in Topeka) or local law enforcement (if not in Topeka). If law enforcement does not recommend you do otherwise, use the following procedure:

- * Double bag the letter or package in plastic (a trash bag is fine) and place it in the trash.
- * Wash hands with SOAP and WATER.
- * No medical attention or individual disinfection recommended.

PACKAGE MARKED WITH OR CONTAINING THREATENING MESSAGE SUCH AS "ANTHRAX":

- * If package or letter is not open, DO NOT OPEN IT.
- * LEAVE it and EVACUATE the room.
- * KEEP others from entering the room.
- * NOTIFY your supervisor, then call State Capitol Police at 296-3420 (if in Topeka) or local law enforcement (if not in Topeka).
- * NOTIFY the Bureau of Epidemiology and Disease Prevention at 296-2951 or 1-877-427-7317.
- * No medical attention or individual disinfection recommended.

OPEN ENVELOPE OR PACKAGE WITH POWDER, OR POWDER SPILLS OUT ONTO SURFACE OF UNOPENED LETTER OR PACKAGE:

- * DO NOT clean powder up. Do not touch it. Keep others away.
- * WASH hands with soap and water.
- * DO NOT brush off your clothes.
- * EVACUATE the room.
- * NOTIFY your supervisor, then call State Capitol Police at 296-3420 (if in Topeka) or local law enforcement (if not in Topeka). Law enforcement will assure proper custody and packing of the letter or package.
- * NOTIFY the Bureau of Epidemiology and Disease Prevention at 296-2951 or 1-877-427-7317.
- * REMOVE clothing as soon as a change of clothing is available and put on fresh clothing.
- * PLACE the clothing you were wearing in a plastic bag. Then wash your hands with water and soap. In most cases, you can clean the clothes you were wearing with your regular wash, using the regular laundry cycle. However, if the clothes are visibly contaminated with powder, discard them after double bagging in plastic.
- * SHOWER with SOAP and WATER as soon as possible at home.
- * MAKE list of all people who had *direct contact* with the powder and give the list to local public health authorities. Any necessary medical attention or individual decontamination will be recommended by public health and safety officials.

OPENING PACKAGE OR LETTER PRODUCES A CLOUD OF DUST OR A SMALL EXPLOSION, OR THE LETTER STATES "ANTHRAX IN HEATING OR AC SYSTEM":

- * LEAVE room immediately; tell everyone in the room to leave with you.
- * SECURE (lock if possible) entry to room.
- * NOTIFY your supervisor.
- * SHUT down the air handling system (in Topeka, Call the Division of Facilities Management at 6-4142).
- * CALL State Capitol Police at 296-3420 (if in Topeka) or local law enforcement (if not in Topeka).
- * NOTIFY the Bureau of Epidemiology and Disease Prevention at 296-2951 or 1-877-427-7317.
- * REMAIN on the premises (but outside the room where the problem occurred) until responders arrive.
- * MAKE list of all people who may have *directly breathed* the dust or smoke and give it to local public health authorities. Any necessary medical attention or individual decontamination will be recommended by public health and safety officials.

Contact Numbers

Kansas Department of Health and Environment	
Epidemiology 24 hour a day toll-free number	1-877-427-7317
State Capitol Police, Troop K, Kansas Highway Patrol, duty officer	296-4169
Kansas Highway Patrol, 24 hour duty officer	785-827-4437
Kansas Division of Emergency Management 24 hour duty officer	785-296-3176
Division of Facilities Management	785-296-4142

For further information, contact the Kansas Department of Health and Environment Bureau of Epidemiology and Disease Prevention at the 24 hour response number: 1-877-427-7317.

- * Please note: Pittsburg State University's Campus Environmental Officer, Mr. Jim Correia, is available at extension 4774.