Suspicious Package Procedures

Overview

A suspicious package is a mail item of unknown contents which can potentially cause injury or destruction or is designed to appear threatening in nature.

A wide range of potential threats can be introduced into an organization by way of the mail system. Although there is not one set of practices to eliminate this threat, the following procedures provide recommendations for recognizing and responding to a suspicious package.

Recognizing a Suspicious Package

A suspicious package can arrive from multiple sources including the United States Postal Service, express couriers such as UPS or FedEx, from local messenger/courier services, inter-office/organizational mail, or can be hand delivered.

Indicators that may make a package suspicious include:

- Missing, incorrect, or undefined destination address
- Inappropriate or unusual labeling
- Excessive postage
- Misspelled words
- No return address or strange return address
- Postmark that does not match return address
- Suspicious or excessive markings, such as “personal,” “confidential,” or “do not x-ray”
- Threatening language on the outside of package
- Unexpected mail from a foreign country

Physical characteristics of the package that may be suspicious include:

- Abnormal shape or discoloration
- Powdery or liquid-type substances leaking through
- Oily stains
- Strange odors
- Abundant amounts of string or package tape
- Lopsided or bulky shape of envelopes or boxes
- Protruding wires
- Exposed aluminum foil or metallic contents

Handling a Suspicious Package

If you come in contact with a package you deem suspicious:

- Do NOT open
- Do not disturb its contents
- Put the package down and do not handle it further
- Do not touch or try to clean up the substance
- Alert others nearby
- Do not remove ANY items from area
Suspicious Package Procedures

- Turn off fans, portable heaters, and other equipment that may create air currents
- Leave the area and gently close the door
- Wash hands if you come in contact with package
- Limit movements within the building to prevent spread of substance
- Advise other from entering room where package resides and restrict access to the area
- Avoid using your cell phone in the immediate area of the package. Although unlikely, it is possible a cell phone can trigger an improvised explosive device to detonate.

Notifying Law Enforcement

If you come into contact or receive a suspicious package:

- Alert UCPD by dialing 123 from campus phone or 773.702.8181 from non-campus phone
  - Calling 911 is also an option
- Proceed to a safe area where you can provide additional information to law enforcement when they arrive on-scene including:
  - Advising responders of all individuals who came into contact with the suspicious package
  - If anything was disseminated from the package
  - If any noise was emitting from the package
  - If any type of particular odor is present

Safety Measures

Once a suspicious package has been confirmed, building occupants should evacuate to a safe area while avoiding coming into contact with the package or the general area around the package.

Preparedness

Be cognizant of any threats made to you, your fellow coworkers or students, or to your organization. For additional training, review FEMA Independent Study Course 906- Workplace Security Awareness.