

Recognizing and Handling a Suspicious Package

What are some of the characteristics of a suspicious package?

Some characteristics of a suspicious package or envelope include the following:

- Incorrect or unusual labeling
 - Excessive (too much) postage
 - Handwritten or poorly typed addresses
 - Common words spelled wrong
 - Strange return address or no return address
 - Wrong titles or title without a name
 - Not addressed to a specific person
 - Marked with stamps, such as "Personal," "Confidential" or "Do not X-ray"
 - Written threats on outside of package
 - Postmarked from a city or state that does not match the return address
- Unusual appearance
 - Powdery substance felt through or appearing on the package or envelope
 - Oily stains, other colored stains, smells
 - Lopsided or uneven envelope
 - Excessive packing material such as masking tape, string, etc.
- Other suspicious signs
 - Heavy weight
 - Ticking sound
 - Wires or aluminum foil coming out of the package

What should be done if suspicious mail is received?

- **Do not open a package or envelope if it looks suspicious.**
- Do not shake or empty the contents of the 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 down on a stable surface.
- Do not sniff, touch, taste or look closely at the package or any of the contents that may have spilled out.
- Alert others in the area about the package or envelope.
- Leave the area, close any doors and take actions to prevent others from entering the area. If possible, shut off the ventilation system.
- Wash hands with soap and water.
- If at work, notify a supervisor, a security officer or a law enforcement official. If at home, contact the police and the local county health department. (Visit www.idph.state.il.us//local/alpha.htm for a listing of all county health departments in Illinois.)
- If possible, make a list of the people who were in the room or area when the suspicious package or envelope was received. Also make a list of people who handled it. Give the lists to both the police and the local public health authorities.