

## *Just the Facts...*

### *How to Handle Mail with a Biological Threat*

Many facilities in communities around the country have received anthrax threat letters. Most were empty envelopes; some have contained powdery substances. The purpose of this fact sheet is to recommend procedures for handling such incidents.

#### **SUSPICIOUS UNOPENED LETTER OR PACKAGE MARKED WITH THREATENING MESSAGE SUCH AS “ANTHRAX”:**

1. Do not shake or empty the contents of any suspicious envelope or package.
2. PLACE the envelope or package in a plastic bag or some other type of container to prevent leakage.
3. If you do not have any container, then COVER the envelope/package with anything (e.g., clothing, paper, trash can, etc.) and do not remove this cover.
4. Then LEAVE the room and CLOSE the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering.
5. WASH your hands with **soap and water** to prevent spreading any powder to your face.
6. What to do next...
  - If you are at **HOME**, then report the incident to local police (military police if on post).
  - If you are at **WORK**, then report the incident to the military police (or local police if off post), **and** notify your building security official or an available supervisor.
7. LIST all people who were in the room or area when this suspicious letter or package was recognized. Give this list to both the local public health authorities and law enforcement officials for follow-up investigations and advice.

#### **ENVELOPE WITH POWDER AND POWDER SPILLS OUT ONTO SURFACE:**

1. DO NOT try to CLEAN UP the powder. COVER the spilled contents immediately with anything (e.g., clothing, paper, trash can, etc.) and do not remove this cover!
2. Then LEAVE the room and CLOSE the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering.
3. WASH your hands with **soap and water** to prevent spreading any powder to your face.
4. What to do next...
  - If you are at **HOME**, then report the incident to local police (military police if on post).
  - If you are at **WORK**, then report the incident to the military police (or local police if off post), **and** notify your building security official or an available supervisor.
5. REMOVE heavily contaminated clothing as soon as possible and place in a plastic bag, or some other container that can be sealed. This clothing bag should be given to the emergency responders for proper handling.
6. SHOWER with **soap and water** as soon as possible. *Do Not Use Bleach Or Other Disinfectant On Your Skin.*
7. If possible, list all people who were in the room or area, especially those who had actual contact with the powder. Give this list to both the local public health authorities so that proper instructions can be given for medical follow-up, and to law enforcement officials for further investigation.

#### **QUESTION OF ROOM CONTAMINATION BY AEROSOLIZATION:**

**For example: small device triggered warning that air-handling system is contaminated, or warning that a biological agent released in a public space.**

1. Turn off local fans or ventilation units in the area.
2. LEAVE area immediately. CLOSE the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering (i.e., keep others away).
3. What to do next...
  - If you are at **HOME**, then *dial “911”* to report the incident to local police and the local FBI field office.
  - If you are at **WORK**, then *dial “911” (or other emergency number)* to report the incident to local police, local military intelligence, the local FBI field office, **and** notify your building security official or an available supervisor.
4. SHUT down air handling system in the building, if possible.
5. If possible, list all people who were in the room or area. Give this list to both the local public health authorities so that proper

instructions can be given for medical follow-up, and to law enforcement officials for further investigation.