



SECTION: RM  
TOPIC: EMERG PROC 06  
MAIL  
FEBRUARY, 2002

## ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES MANUAL

**SUBJECT: EMERGENCY PROCEDURES – MAIL HANDLING PROCEDURES**

### **Identifying Suspicious Mail**

A piece of mail should be considered suspicious if it has one or more of the following characteristics:

- Is unexpected or from someone unfamiliar to you
- Is addressed to someone who is no longer with the organization or is otherwise outdated.
- Has no return address, or has one that can't be verified as legitimate.
- Is of unusual weight, given its size, or is lopsided or oddly shaped
- Is marked with restrictive endorsements such as "Personal" or "Confidential" or "Do Not X-Ray."
- Has protruding wires, strange odors or stains
- Shows a city or state in the postmark that does not match the return address
- Has excessive postage
- Has misspelled words; badly typed or written
- Is addressed to title only
- Shows pressure or resistance when removing contents
- Has a sloshing sound, buzzing or ticking
- Includes unknown powdery substance in the opened envelope
- Marked with any threatening language
- Excessive packaging material such as masking tape, string, etc.

### **Common sense precautions for employees who handle mail:**

The risk of personal injury or contracting any disease from an envelope is extremely low. General awareness of one's surroundings and suspicious mail is appropriate.

- Wash your hands with warm soap and water before and after handling mail
- Do not eat, drink or smoke around mail
- Disposable gloves may be appropriate to use, but keep in mind that many gloves have white powder inside of them to ease removal
- Surgical masks, eye protection or gowns are not necessary or recommended

### **If a piece of suspicious mail is received but not opened:**

- The piece of mail should not be handled any further
- The employee receiving the mail should immediately report the situation to the highest level supervisor available in the department and 911 should be called
- Law enforcement officials will respond and take care of the situation from there.
- All persons who have handled the piece of mail should wash their hands with soap and water and provide their names to law enforcement officials.

### **If there has been a possible exposure to an unknown substance, such as exposure to an unknown powder upon opening a piece of mail:**

- The piece of mail should not be handled any further
- The envelope containing suspicious material should not be shaken or emptied
- The employee receiving the mail should report the situation to the highest level supervisor available in the department and 911 should be called.
- The immediate area should be evacuated and cordoned off to keep people away
- Law enforcement will respond to take care of the situation from there.