

Quick Guide To Dealing With Suspect Items eg Postal Bombs, Anthrax etc.

Recognition of a Suspect Item

- **Dimensions:** A letter bomb is unlikely to be less than 3 mm (1/8 inch) thick, or weigh less than 43 grams (1 ½ ounces).
- **Balance/Weight:** Is the packet evenly balanced? Lopsided packages should be treated with suspicion. Packages that are disproportionately heavy for their size could contain an improvised explosive device (IED).
- **Holes or Stains:** Packages with grease stains or pin holes in the wrapping should be treated as suspect.
- **Smell:** Some explosive materials smell of marzipan or almonds.
- **Noise:** Ticking or hissing sounds may indicate the presence of an explosive device.
- **The Flap:** Is the wrapping completely stuck down? The absence of small gaps are left at the end of the flap might indicate a suspect item.
- **Type of Envelope:** Experience has shown that postal bombs are usually found in "Jiffy" bags or similar types of envelope.
- **Packaging/Postage:** Has an excessive amount of wrapping or sealing material been used or has an excessive amount of postage been paid? (To avoid any possibility of delay or enquiry due to underpayment)
- **Contents 1 :** If, in addition to other indicators, (balance, weight, packaging etc) the appearance suggests that the package could contain a book or videocassette it should be treated as a possible postal bomb or IED.
- **Contents 2:** If a powdery, granular or sand like substance, residue or liquid can be seen on the outside of the item or leaking from it, the item should be treated as suspect.
- **Markings:** Restrictive endorsements such as "Personal" or "Confidential" may indicate a suspicious item.

19Dec01

Found a Suspicious Item

What Do I Do?

- ✓ If you are in the office, set it down carefully on the nearest flat horizontal surface or, if available, place it in a purpose built suspect package container.
- ✓ Warn everyone in the immediate vicinity and clear the surrounding area. (20m radius zone around item)
- ✓ Notify your immediate supervisor who will (if necessary) contact the police and seek assistance from the local security staff.
- ✓ If you find a suspicious Item while outside the office (Collections/ Deliveries etc.) warn members of the public in the vicinity and set the item down carefully. If the item is in a Pillar box - DO NOT clear the box, and arrange for the box to be sealed. Seek immediate police assistance by the most convenient means and then contact your supervisor.
- ✓ If you are asked by a member of the public to take back a item which they have had delivered and are suspicious of the contents, they must be advised to contact the police. On no account accept the item and agree to return it to the office.
- ✓ Wash your hands as soon as possible if in contact with a suspect substance

Do Not

- ✗ Drop , shake or throw it away.
- ✗ Attempt to open the package.
- ✗ Bend or flex the package in an attempt to ascertain the contents.
- ✗ Immerse the package in sand or water.
- ✗ Place it under a sandbag or other heavy object.
- ✗ Place the package in any container other than the one specifically designed for this purpose.
- ✗ Handle the package any more than is absolutely necessary.



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