



Suspicious Packages Instructional Guide

Porter County Emergency Management Agency



Suspicious Packages

In the wake of bombings occurring throughout the world, many people have grown increasingly concerned about potential suspicious packages. However, an explosive device is just one of the potential dangers a package can contain. Other dangers include chemical, radiological or biological agents. Any of these agents have the potential of inflicting harm to human beings as well as facilities. There are a variety of reasons that could make you a potential target, including, revenge, extortion, terrorism or even common business disputes. Anyone has the potential to be a target. So, how do I spot a suspicious package? There are several things that should raise, “Red Flags” to indicate something could be wrong.

Red Flags:

1. Restricted endorsements, such as “Personal” or “Private”. This is even more suspicious if the person it is addressed to does not normally receive personal mail at work.
2. No return address.
3. Inaccurate addressee, such as the person’s name or title.
4. The misspelling of common words.
5. Distorted handwriting. The sender may be attempting to disguise their handwriting in an effort to not have it be recognized or traced back to them.
6. Homemade labels or cut-&-paste lettering.
7. Visible wires, aluminum foil or other such items protruding from the package. These items can be used to complete an electrical circuit or as a mechanism to trigger the device.
8. Oily stains on the package.
9. The package emits a peculiar odor. Note: Do not repeatedly sniff the package. If it does contain a harmful substance, you don’t want to continue inhaling it.
10. Excessive postage.
11. The return address does not match the postmarked city or state.
12. The package appears uneven or lopsided in weight.
13. The package has an irregular shape, soft spots or bulges.
14. Excessive tape or string on the package. It is obvious it was not professionally wrapped. There may also be more than one kind of tape securing the package.
15. “Rush-Do Not Delay”, “Do Not X-Ray” or other such messages written on the package.
16. A buzzing, ticking noise or a sloshing sound.
17. Pressure or resistance noted when removing contents from the package. This could be a pressure-sensitive mechanism used to automatically activate the device.





Suspicious Packages Instructional Guide

Porter County Emergency Management Agency



What to Do:

1. Notify the police immediately. When making notification, do not use a 2-way radio or cell phone within 100 feet of the package. The radio waves may trigger the device.
2. Don't shake, alter, touch, move or open the package. Avoid carrying the package or showing it to other people so they can examine it.
3. Leave the package on a stable surface.
4. Do not put the package in water or a confined space, such as a desk drawer, file cabinet, etc. The authorities will need to access it in order to check it.
5. Secure the area the package is in and clear the surrounding areas.
6. Notify others in the building and do not let anyone into the area.
7. Wash your hands immediately with soap and water to prevent contamination to other parts of your body as well as other items you touch.
8. If the package does contain harmful substances, remember you may have been exposed to the contents. Keep this in mind and limit your proximity to others so as not to cross-contaminate them. Better to be safe than sorry.
9. If possible, turn off the building's ventilation system (heating or air conditioning) to prevent any hazardous substances from being spread throughout the rest of the building.
10. Note anyone who was in the room with you when the package was opened. They could have been exposed to the contents as well.
11. Note anyone else who may have handled the package.
12. Follow the instructions of law enforcement.

