

# Handling Suspicious Packages

## Things You May Encounter in the Mail

- Legitimate packages
- Harmless pranks
- Pointed or edged items
- Biohazards
- Chemicals
- Explosives

## What Makes a Package Suspicious ?

- *Type of mail:* Foreign, Priority, Special Delivery **(and not expected)**.
- *Restrictive endorsements:* Confidential, Personal, To Be Opened by Addressee Only.
- *Visual distractions:* Fragile, Rush, Handle with care.
- *Excessive postage:* (usually stamps).
- *Fictitious or no return address.*
- *Shows a city or state postmark that doesn't match the return address.*
- *Poorly typed or handwritten addresses.*
- *Incorrect titles or titles with no names.*
- *Misspellings of common words.*
- *Oily stains or discolorations.*
- *Sticky or adhesive substances.*
- *Excessive or uneven weight distribution.*
- *Excessive binding material:* Masking, electrical, or strapping tape, string, or twine.
- *Rigid, lopsided, or uneven envelope.*
- *Makes a sandy noise or any other noise when moved.*
- *Strange odor or chemical smell.*
- *Crystallization on wrapper.*
- *Powdery substance on or leaking from the package.*
- *Non-English writing.*
- *Leaking any type of fluid.*
- *Protruding wires, screws, or other metal parts.*
- *Anything "out of the ordinary" about the item.*

**Notify the police immediately of suspicious packages, persons, or incidents.**

**Division of Capitol Police**

**Emergency Numbers**

**786-HELP (4357)**

**[www.dcp.virginia.gov](http://www.dcp.virginia.gov)**

## If You Receive a Suspicious Package

- Don't shake or bump it (handle with care).
- Don't open, smell, touch, or taste it.
- Treat it as suspect – notify your supervisor and call the police immediately.
- Attempt to check the validity of the package through the return address.
- Isolate the package immediately by placing it in a sealable container (i.e., garbage bag).
- Carefully remove rubber gloves (if worn) and place them in the same container before sealing it.
- Evacuate the immediate area, including your self.
- Ensure that all persons who have handled the package immediately wash their hands with soap and water.

## What Should I do if I Receive Mail That Appears to be Contaminated?

- Do not handle the mail or package suspected of contamination.
- Do not attempt to clean up any spilled contents.
- Make sure the envelope or package is isolated and the immediate area evacuated.
- Ensure that all persons who have touched the package or envelope wash their hands, face, and arms with soap and water immediately.
- Notify your supervisor and call the police immediately.
- Make a list of all persons who have touched the envelope or package and contact information for them as soon as possible. Provide this information to the emergency responders upon their arrival.
- As soon as practical, shower with soap and water. If you fear that you have been exposed to a toxic substance, you may go to a local hospital emergency room and advise them that you may have been exposed to a hazardous material. If you think you have been exposed to Anthrax, seek medical attention immediately.
- Contact the Center for Disease Control Emergency Response Center at 770-488-7100 for answers to any questions.