



GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Updated Recommendations for Handling Suspicious Packages or Envelopes

Previous CDC recommendations for handling suspicious packages or envelopes were published as part of CDC Health Advisories on October 12 and 14, 2001. These recommendations were part of guidelines for handling anthrax and other biological agent threats. The following are updated CDC interim recommendations:

Handling of Suspicious Packages or Envelopes

- Do not shake or empty the contents of a suspicious package or envelope.
- Do not carry the package or envelope, show it to others, or allow others to examine it.
- Put the package or envelope on a stable surface; do not sniff, touch, taste, or look closely at it or any contents that may have spilled.
- Alert others in the area about the suspicious package or envelope. Leave the area, close any doors, and take actions to prevent others from entering the area. If possible, shut off the ventilation system.
- Wash hands with soap and water to prevent spreading potentially infectious material to face or skin. Seek additional instructions for exposed or potentially exposed persons.
- If at work, notify a supervisor, a security officer, or a law enforcement official. If at home, contact the local law enforcement agency.
- If possible, create a list of persons who were in the room or area when this suspicious letter or package was recognized and a list of persons who also may have handled this package or letter. Give the list to both the local public health authorities and law enforcement officials.

These recommendations were published on October 25, 2001, in "Update: Investigation of bioterrorism-related anthrax and interim guidelines for exposure management and antimicrobial therapy." *MMWR* 2001; 50: 909-919 found at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5042a1.htm>.

For more information, visit www.bt.cdc.gov or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (Español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY)