

HANDLING OF SUSPECT PACKAGES

1 INTRODUCTION

This guidance is based on advice from the Police on the handling of suspect packages which have been delivered to an organisation

2 WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

The following examples are some of the things you should look out for but the list is not exhaustive, and individually these examples do not necessarily mean that the package is suspicious. However if several examples are present it might be worth considering the package as suspicious.

Delivery

- The item may have been delivered by hand from an unknown source.

Labelling

- Poor handwriting, spelling, typing or a stencilled address.
- Job title listed but no name.
- No return address printed on the package.
- Addressed to someone no longer in the organisation.
- Wrongly addressed, or come from an unexpected source (e.g. an unusual place).
- Marked with restrictive endorsements such as "personal" or "confidential".
- Marked with threatening language.

Packaging

- Grease marks, any discolouration or crystals on the surface of the envelope.
- Visible wiring or aluminium foil, especially if the envelope or package is damaged.
- The envelope or package feels very heavy for its size.
- The weight distribution may be uneven; contents may be rigid in a flexible envelope or appear to be under tension.
- If a package, it may have excessive wrapping, tape or string.
- There may be too many stamps for the weight of the package.
- A pin-hole may be visible in the envelopes or outer wrapping.

Odour

- An unusual odour, such as marzipan or machine oil.

Contents

- Granular or finely powered material loose or in a container.

3 HANDLING OF MAIL

- Open all mail with a letter opener or other method that is least likely to disturb the contents.
- Open packages/envelopes with a minimum of movement.
- Do not blow into the envelope/ package.
- Do not shake or pour out the contents.
- Keep hands away from nose and mouth whilst opening mail.

4 PROCEDURE IF MEMBERS OF STAFF HAVE ANY CONCERNS

- Handle the item carefully, DO NOT squeeze, press or tamper with it.
- Once you decide that it is suspect, gently lay the package down on a hard horizontal surface in an area where it will not be disturbed by others; do not handle the package again once it has been laid down.
- Contact the person in the University who was to receive the package, or alternatively contact the sender if his/her name and address appears on the exterior of the package.
- Call Security (ext 3939), who will in turn contact the Police and an Estates Manager will also be contacted.
- Get everyone to leave the room, one person should wait outside the room for the Police/Estates Manager to arrive (and also to prevent others entering the area), stand away from any areas of glazing and out of the line of sight of the package. Do not use radios or mobile phones in the vicinity of the package.

Note: the fire alarm MUST NOT be used to evacuate the building.

5 IF YOU OPEN A PACKAGE WHICH CONTAINS A SUSPICIOUS SUBSTANCE:

- Call Security (ext 3939) who will in turn contact the Police and an Estates manager.
- Inform your supervisor (if in the room).
- It is important that any potential contamination to other people and areas is limited, for this reason you should do the following :
 - 1) Prevent others from entering the room.
 - 2) Close all windows and doors to the room, turn off computers and any other fan devices/air conditioning.
 - 3) Avoid further contact with the substance if possible (i.e. do not touch your mouth, eyes etc).
 - 4) The only instance where thorough washing is advised is if you suffer discomfort following contact with what appears to be corrosive solid or liquid; lots of water should be used.
 - 5) Remain in the room if possible. If you need to wash/undress, this should be done in the nearest vacated area nearby to prevent the spread of contamination.
 - 6) Emergency services have procedures in place and will advise on the next course of action.

6 SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES FOUND OUTSIDE

- Do not touch the package.
- Call Security who will in turn contact the Police and an Estates Manager.