



A letter sent to Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley with the incendiary package.

# Exploding packages remind: Be aware of suspicious mail

## SUSPICIOUS MAIL OR PACKAGES

Protect yourself, your business, and your mailroom.

If you receive a suspicious letter or package:

- Stop. Don't handle.
- Isolate it immediately.
- Don't open, smell, or taste.
- Activate your emergency plan. Notify a supervisor.



If you suspect the mail or package contains a bomb (explosive), or radiological, biological, or chemical threat:

- Isolate area immediately • Call 911 • Wash your hands with soap and water



The U.S. Postal Service's poster cautioning postal workers on suspicious mail and packages.

**T**hree recent incidents involving incendiary packages mailed to officials in Washington, DC, and Maryland have the Postal Service reminding its employees to remain vigilant against threats posed by suspicious parcels and letters.

On Jan. 6, two packages sent to Maryland government offices in Annapolis and Hanover were found to contain incendiary material. A day later, a similar parcel addressed to Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano ignited while it was being processed by the Postal Service's government mail annex in northeast Washington.

Fortunately, no one was injured in any of the incidents, which authorities believe are related.

The two Maryland packages were addressed to Gov. Martin O'Malley and state Transportation Secretary Beverley Swaim-Staley. State police report that both of the Maryland packages contained notes reading, "Report suspicious activity! Total [expletive]! You have created a self-fulfilling prophecy." The notes were signed "-X-".

Authorities have not said whether the Washington package sent to Napolitano contained a similar note. The facility where that parcel was discovered was created specifically to process mail addressed to federal government officials following the anthrax attacks in 2001, which killed two postal employees at the District's Brentwood mail facility.

In light of the Maryland incidents and before the Washington package was discovered, the Postal Service instructed managers to hold mandatory stand-up talks on recognizing and handling suspicious mail.

"Sadly, letters have been used as weapons for almost as long as there have been postal services," National Association of Letter Carriers President Fredric V. Rolando said. "Now that these

latest threats have emerged, all of us need to make sure we're familiar with the Service's guidelines."

The talk encouraged all employees to pay special attention to package characteristics, such as shape, look, address and packaging.

**Shape**—Is it lopsided or uneven? Is it rigid or bulky?

**Look and smell**—Are there oily stains, discolorations or crystals on the wrapper? Does it have a strange odor?

**Address**—Is there a return address? Are there restrictive markings (e.g., "Do not X-ray")? Are there misspelled words? Is it addressed to a title rather than to an individual? Is it an incorrect title? Is it poorly typed or written?

**Packaging**—Is it sealed with tape? Is there excessive tape? Is there excessive postage?

Once a suspicious letter or package has been identified, employees should think of the three "P's": Package, People and Plan.

**Package:** Don't handle. Isolate it.

**People:** Clear the area of people. Notify a supervisor.

**Plan:** Contact the Postal Inspection Service and follow the emergency plan. If there is smoke, fumes or vapors, or if employees are exhibiting medical symptoms, evacuate the area, call local emergency responders and follow their instructions.

The USPS's Poster 84 outlines these procedures. It can be downloaded at [usps.com/news/\\_pdf/poster.pdf](http://usps.com/news/_pdf/poster.pdf).

"We are all keeping an eye on this unfolding situation," NALC Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr. said. "Our members can be confident that this union will make sure the Postal Service does what is necessary to keep postal employees and the American people safe." ☒



Only days after Congress convened for 2011, the nation was shocked by the attack on Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (D-AZ) in Tucson and the deaths and injuries of numerous others at the scene.

Rep. Giffords has been a strong supporter of letter carriers and a thoughtful, moderate legislator. She won re-election last fall with the endorsement and support of the NALC.

"We offer our prayers to Rep. Giffords and the other victims, and their families, with hope for a quick recovery," NALC President Fredric V. Rolando said. "As United Mine Workers President Cecil Roberts said at last year's convention in Anaheim, the NALC is always one of the first unions to assist in a tragedy and ask, 'What can we do to comfort your people?' Our support goes to everyone touched by this—the victims, and the entire Tucson community.

"This incident has prompted renewed calls for civility and respect in our national political conversation," Rolando added, "and we hope that happens, so that at least something positive can emerge from this tragedy."

## Struck Iowa carrier recovering slowly

**G**reg Kline, a 23-year letter carrier from Bettendorf, IA, is slowly recovering from serious injuries he suffered when a vehicle struck him as he walked his route on Dec. 22.

Kline was crossing the 1300 block of West 3rd Street in Davenport when he was hit by a van, causing numerous broken bones, including several skull fractures, as well as other injuries.

He was airlifted to the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, where he was treated in the intensive care unit.

On Jan. 4, Kline was able to get out of bed and stand for the first time since the accident. Although he was transferred out of the ICU Jan. 7 and sent to a hospital closer to his home, he still faces a long recovery and rehabilitation.

Kline, an Army veteran, is a shop steward for Davenport Branch 506 and lives in Bettendorf with his wife Faye. He has two daughters.

Donations and cards may be sent to Kline and his family in care of NALC Branch 506, P.O. Box 911, Davenport, IA 52805. ✉

## President appoints RAAs

**N**ALC President Fredric V. Rolando has announced the appointment of three regional administrative assistants.

**James D. Henry** (Region 1) became a letter carrier in 1988 after serving in the Marine Corps. Since then, he held several offices for Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100, from steward to chairman of the executive board to senior vice president. Henry has also worked on the dispute resolution team. He recently retired from the Marines as a reservist. As an RAA, he replaces Christopher Jackson, who was elected Region 1 national business agent last summer at the NALC Convention in Anaheim.

**Mark Sims** (Region 5) has been a letter carrier and NALC activist for 31 years. After serving as president of Springfield, MO Branch 203 and a Region 5 arbitration advocate, Sims came to NALC Headquarters in 2006 to work in the Contract Administration Unit. He replaces Dan Pittman, who was elected Region 5 NBA by the Anaheim convention.

**Monica L. Walker** (Region 8) has served as a letter carrier and NALC member since 1998. Her union offices have included Baton Rouge Branch 129 secretary and Louisiana State Association of Letter Carriers president. She also edited her branch newsletter and coordinated its food drive efforts. Walker is an NALC Leadership Academy graduate. She replaces Peter Moss, who was elected Region 8 NBA during last summer's convention. ✉

## Corrections

A story in the January 2011 *Postal Record* stated that Region 3 National Business Agent Neal Tisdale was re-elected to office by acclamation at the 2010 NALC Convention in Anaheim. In fact, Tisdale was elected to his third four-year term as NBA following balloting among his region's active and retired members.

A story in the same *Postal Record* stated that the students for the two sessions of the 2012 Leadership Academy have been chosen by Headquarters. The date should have read 2011. No decision has yet been made regarding participants for next year.