



**Facilitator's
Suspicious Mail and Unknown
Powders or Substances
Tabletop Exercise Guide
—Large Office or Plant—**

United States Postal Service
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Guidelines for Tabletop Exercise Administration

Exercise Overview

This is an integrated series of small scenarios that will provide a facility with a standard approach for exercising its response to an employee finding a questionable substance in a mail piece. This exercise is applicable to large offices or plants with > 100 Man Years of Work or for any facility with a Biohazard Detection System (BDS).

Overall Objectives

Upon completion of this exercise, the participants will be able to:

- Discuss the response steps in the current Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances Memorandum of Policy dated May 2, 2005 that concerns an open mailpiece with suspicious powder spilling onto a surface at a large office or plant.
- Explain their responsibilities after discovery of suspicious mail and unknown powder or substance in a Postal facility.
- Explain their role in notification procedures.
- Explain the procedures they must follow to notify appropriate response personnel such as Postal Inspection Service (IS) personnel and local first responders.
- Explain the support that they are required to provide to Inspection Service and local first responders.
- Appreciate the complexity of emergency response and how regular exercise of emergency preparedness safeguards employees and customers.
-

Upon completion of the exercise, the facility manager will be aware of how well the facility is prepared to respond to a suspicious mail and unknown powder or substance incident and should be able to address any required improvements.

Suggested Exercise Participants

The maximum number of active participants is dependent on the size of the facility and the ability of the facility to include all categories of personnel typically involved in a suspicious powder incident. Categories of participants typically included are:

Facility Operations

- Line Supervisors
- Tour Managers
- Facility Manager

Facility Team Leaders

- Emergency Management Team (EMT) Leaders
- Incidental Spill and Leak Response Team Leaders
- Emergency Evacuation Team (EET) Leaders

Facility Staff

- EMT, if applicable
- Safety
- Environmental

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- Medical
- Maintenance
- In-Plant Support
- Inspection Service liaison

Local Emergency Response Support (Optional, if available)

- Local and/or State First Responders

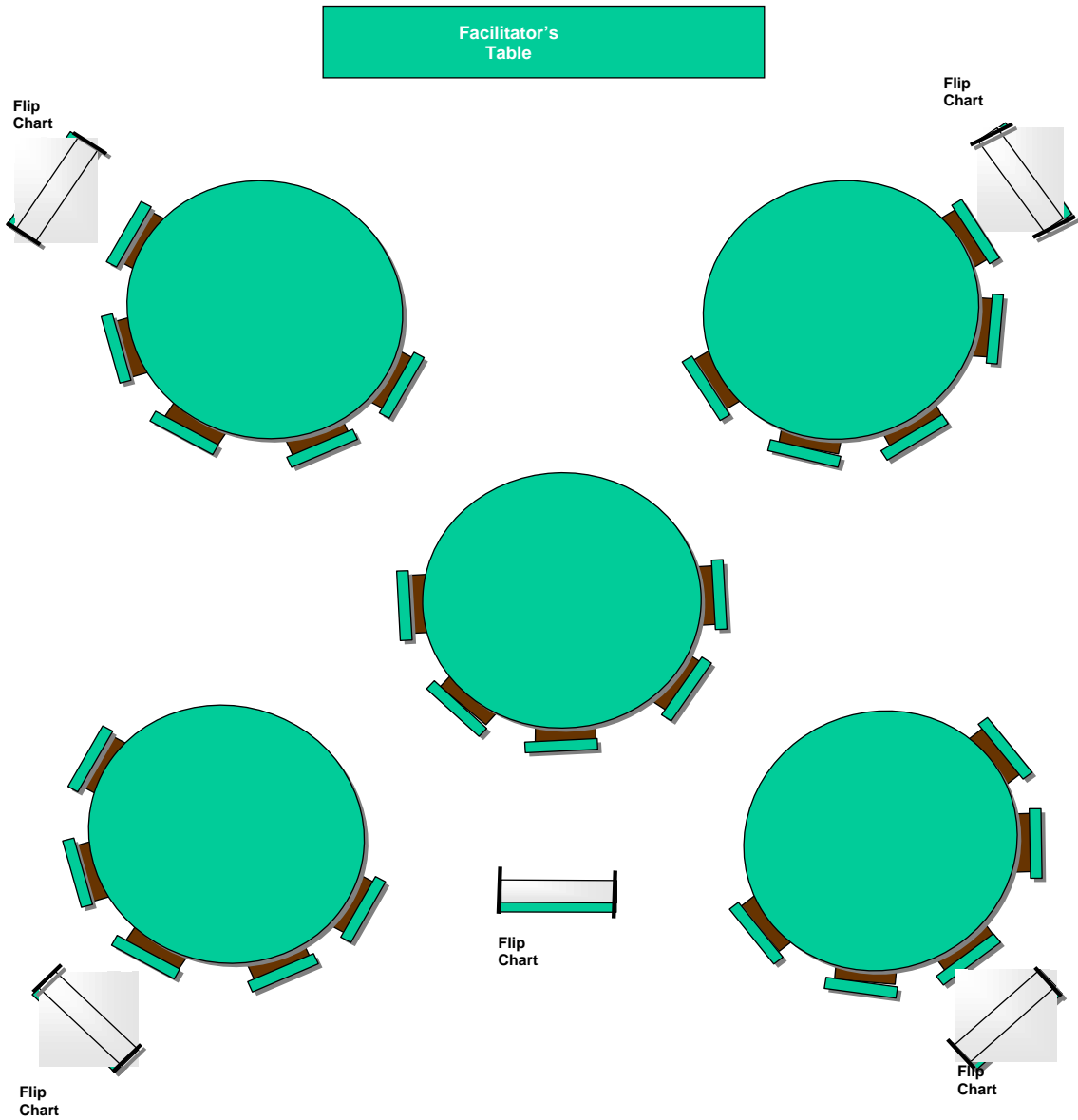
Program Materials

- This Facilitator's Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances Exercise Guide
- Handouts made using this guide and the listed references (at the discretion of the facilitator)
- References available from USPS Suspicious Mail webpage on "blue".
http://blue.usps.gov/emergencypreparedness/ep_suspicious_mail.htm
- Policy Letter: Emergency Action Plans, Oct 10, 2001
- First Friday Standup Talk: Call it the way you see it: Making sense of suspicious packages, 6/6/05
- Policy Letter: Emergency Preparedness Policy, Jan 13, 2004 (available under "IEMP" on the Emergency Preparedness webpage)
<http://blue.usps.gov/emergencypreparedness/welcome.htm>
- Poster 205, Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances, Appendix A
- Response Checklist Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances
- (Supervisor Checklist) Appendix B
- EL-810-96-1, Hazardous Materials Response
- ELM Section 850
- Attendance roster
- Evaluation Questions for each exercise scene.

Facility, Equipment, and Supply Needs

- Well lit training room for up to 25 persons
- Rip charts (1 for each 5 participants) with markers and masking tape
- Name tents
- Pencils, pens and paper
- Folders for the handouts
- Suggested room layout (page 6)

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Location and Duration

Generally this exercise will be conducted in a Postal facility, there may be instances when the exercise may take place off site, e.g., as an agenda item included in other meetings.

This exercise should take no more than 90 minutes.

Responsibility for Administering the Exercise

The facility head designates members of the facility Emergency Management Team (EMT) and other designated persons at the facility to be responsible for planning, scheduling, facilitating and recording the results of the exercise. Persons designated to lead the exercise should have attended the Postal Service's Facilitative Instructor Workshop (FIW) to ensure they have been introduced to group facilitation techniques.

Delivering the Exercise

This exercise is best presented by one or two facilitators who are very familiar with Postal policy on emergency management, emergency response, evacuation and the facility's emergency action plan. Persons who have attended the Emergency Management Fundamentals Course, FEMA courses, and Postal HAZMAT Specialist courses may be appropriate. At least one of the facilitators should have credit for attending the USPS FIW.

As an exercise, the facilitator should ensure all participants engage in an active discussion of each scene. The facilitator may separate the participants into groups at several tables; then proceed by asking each 'table' to prepare an answer; call on one table to deliver the answer and; guide a general group discussion of the table's response.

While one facilitator is leading the discussion of each scene, the other can serve as backup, enter discussion items on a rip chart, and record the results of the exercise.

Evaluating the Exercise

The facilitator will introduce the material for each scene of the exercise. The facilitator should not, at this point, provide answers to questions that identify the correct answers for the emergency response processes exercised in the scene. If participants ask for answers, just tell them "We will provide a discussion and review of the correct procedures as we go through each scene."

When the participants present their solutions to the exercise scenes, the participants will critique themselves with assistance from the facilitator.

Evaluation questions will be used at the end of each scene as a way of determining and recording:

- What participants knew before the exercise;
- What they learned during the exercise; and
- As an opportunity to discuss questions they may have.

Reporting and Tracking the Exercise

The facilitator will be responsible for completing the questions at the end of each scene. The facilitator will enter a written record of exercise attendance and completion in the National Training Database as course number [19201-57](#)

Notes for Facilitator

Notes to the facilitator are spread throughout the Facilitator's Guide.

These are indented, italicized and boldfaced like this sentence.

Questions and Suggestions

Questions concerning Postal policy regarding response to suspicious mail and unknown powders or substances should be directed to the District or Area Managers of Emergency Preparedness.

Questions and suggestions concerning technical content of the scenarios and the associated exercise should be directed to USPS Headquarters, Emergency Preparedness.

Questions concerning National Training Database recordkeeping should be directed to the local PEDC.

Exercise Opening

Time Allocated for Opening Session

15 minutes

Instructional Methods

Guided discussion, exercises

Summary of the Exercise Opening

- Welcome by the senior postal manager present
- Getting to know each other
- Statement of exercise objectives

Participant Material Used

Flip charts and markers

Pens, pencils and paper

Facilitator Media Required

This Large Office or Plant— Facilitator's Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances Exercise Guide

Other Emergency Response references - see page 5, Program Materials.

Introduction

The facilitator identifies himself/herself to the participants and addresses administrative matters, exercise duration, breaks, rest rooms, coffee, smoking policy, fire exits, etc.

Opening Remarks

The senior postal manager present, or designee, welcomes the participants. The opening remarks should include reference to the role the participants play in responding to emergencies and implementing the facility emergency action plan (EAP). It also should stress the importance of the collaborative relationship between labor and management during emergencies.

Ice Breaker

The facilitator opens the exercise with an icebreaker exercise. Ask participants to tell, one at a time, their name, where they are from, their job position and their role in the facility EAP. This is especially important if you have local or State first responders at the exercise.

Terminal Objectives of the Exercise

The facilitator explains that upon completion of this exercise, the participants will be able to:

- Discuss Poster 205, “Immediate Response Actions - Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances”, and the supervisory checklist “Response Checklist Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances”. The exercise concerns an open mailpiece with an unknown powder spilling onto a surface at a large office or plant.
- Explain their responsibilities after discovery of a suspicious powder in a Postal facility.
- Explain their role in notification procedures.
- Explain the procedures they must follow to notify appropriate response personnel such as Inspection Service personnel and local first responders.
- Explain the support they are required to provide to Inspection Service and local first responders.
- Appreciate the complexity of emergency response and how regular exercise of emergency preparedness safeguards employees and customers.

Upon completion of the exercise the facility manager will be aware of how well the facility is prepared to respond to a suspicious or unknown powder spill from a mailpiece and should be able to address any required improvements.

Expectations

Facilitator moves over to the flip chart and asks:

What do we need to learn about handling Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances?

As the participants give their expectations, the facilitator notes them on the flip chart. After getting volunteer inputs, he/she puts this sheet on the wall as a “parking lot” to refer to during the exercise to remind us to address the issues.

Exercise Scenario Overview

This exercise is composed of a series of three scenarios of a hypothetical suspicious mail or unknown powder incident. Facility managers can use it to evaluate their capability to respond to an incident following their Integrated Emergency Management Plan (IEMP), if applicable; their EAP and current Postal policy. Answering the questions posed at the end of each scene will provide the participants and facility manager with insight into response areas that require improvement.

Exercise facilitators should:

- Read the existing emergency management guidance available on the Resources page of the Safety Toolkit (policies, safety talks, etc.). The intranet addresses are: http://tkwebprod.usps.gov/toolkitweb/hr_dev/tk1_3/home_pg/Emer_Mgt/Emer_mgt_main.htm
- http://tkwebprod.usps.gov/toolkitweb/hr_dev/tk1_3/home_pg/Anthrax/Anthrax_main.htm
-
- Read the existing emergency management guidance available on the Emergency Preparedness page at: <http://blue.usps.gov/emergencypreparedness/>
-
- Review Poster 205, “Immediate Response Actions - Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances”, Appendix A

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- Review Response “Checklist Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances”, Appendix B.
- Read the entire exercise scenario and prepare to fulfill the facilitator’s role described at the beginning of each scene.
- Answer the questions at the end of each scene to:
 -
- Capture the ability of facility personnel to act in accordance with Postal guidance,
- Identify areas where facility response can improve, and
- Maintain a record of the results of the exercise and any subsequent improvements for possible review by upper level management.

This scenario takes place at the receiving docks and at the initial mail processing equipment of a large Postal facility (over 100 work years of employment). Each scene covers the actions described in the current Poster 205, Immediate Response Actions - Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances, and the supervisory checklist, Response Checklist Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances (see Appendix A and Appendix B).

Scene 1—The Initial Observation

Objectives

Participants should be able to:

- Describe what constitutes an “unknown” powder.
- Describe what constitutes a “suspicious” powder.
- Describe the steps employees should have taken when they discover a suspicious powder.
- Describe a “suspicious” mail piece.

Time Allocated for Scene 1

25 minutes

Instructional Method

Guided Discussion; Exercises

Steps in Exercising the Scene

- Introduction of the scene
- Participant role play and group discussion
- Evaluation

Notes for Facilitator

This scene is targeted at facility supervisors who are likely to be the first to receive a report from an employee of a suspicious or unknown powder spilling from a mail piece. It tests their knowledge of the definition of suspicious powder and the steps they should take to prevent further spread and to initiate notification procedures.

For Further Information

- Mandatory Stand-up Talk, Emergency Preparedness and Employee Safety
- Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances and supervisor checklist that concerns an open mailpiece with suspicious powder spilling onto a surface.

Scene 1

The facilitator describes the following scene and asks the supervisors and managers participating in the exercise the questions below.

Alternatively, the facilitator can ask each table of participants to prepare answers to the questions and present them to the group.

The facilitator must be prepared to answer follow-on questions about identification of suspicious mail and the initial notification sequence.

During the middle of Tour 3, a clerk finds a mail piece that has torn and observes that a dark tan powder is leaking onto mail processing equipment. She comes to you and reports that the powder is in a non-commercial package and is not readily identifiable as food or drink powder. The package does not have a return address and the address is handwritten. There are no marked handling or delivery restrictions. It is not an unusual size or shape and does not have any noticeable odor or discoloration.

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Q's and A's

1 a. Q: For a line supervisor—is this a situation requiring a response?

A: Yes, a response is required if an employee comes across any powder or granulated substance coming from a mail piece, *unless* the contents are readily identified as harmless (for example, a torn package of dried soup or commercial food and commercially packaged powders).

1 b. Q: For a tour supervisor—Are loose powders and similar materials not directly associated with mail, such as in a swing room, locker room or aisle, for example – likely to be hazardous?

A. They are not likely to be hazardous. Everything from donut powdered sugar to spilled makeup has caused unnecessary alarm, disruption to operations and wasted emergency resources.

2. Q: For a line supervisor—What characteristics make a mail piece suspicious?

A: **A parcel or letter is considered suspicious when it has more than one of the following characteristics. Start by paying close attention to the Shape, Look, Addressing and Packaging (remember SLAP) of parcels and letters, also:**

- no return address (or fictitious or unverifiable return address),
- restrictive markings (such as “Personal”, “Confidential”, or “Do Not X-Ray”),
- addressed to titles or titles with no name,
- excessive postage,
- handwritten or badly typed address,
- misspelled words,
- oily stains, discoloration, or crystallization (including powders),
- strange odors,
- sealed with tape (or with excessive tape),
- unusual weight given size, lopsided or oddly shaped, protruding wires.

3 a. Q: For a line supervisor— What should employees do if they observe a suspicious powder spilling from a mail piece?

A: Employees should not disturb the powder in any way. They should also prevent others from entering the area and wash their hands with soap and water as soon as possible.

3 b. Q: For a line supervisor—Whom should the employee contact?

A: Employees should notify a supervisor immediately. If a supervisor is not available , they must contact the MDO or facility manager.

4 a. Q: For a tour supervisor—What are the initial immediate actions you should take?

Supervisory Checklist

1. Leave the mail piece or substance where it was found. Do not disturb. Do not try to clean up the substance.
2. Clear the immediate area of all persons and keep others away.
3. Instruct people in the immediate area to wash hands and other exposed skin with soap and water.
4. Direct these persons to a designated area away from the substance to await further instruction.

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5. List the names of the persons in the immediate area of the mail piece/substance.
6. Cordon off the immediate area.
7. Shut down all equipment in the immediate area and HVAC systems (heating, ventilation and air conditioning).
8. If possible without disturbing the mail piece or substance, document:
location of mail piece/substance Description of substance, description of mail piece (markings, labels, declarations, postage), addressee's name and address, mailer's name and address
9. Contact the Postal Inspection Service with all available information to conduct a threat assessment. Call the Inspection Service 24 hr Division Number:
10. Based on the Inspection Service threat assessment, follow inspector instructions, take actions and make appropriate notifications as required in your local emergency plan. Call your District Manager of Emergency Preparedness to report this incident in the Postal Emergency Management System (PEMS). This is mandatory.
11. Expediently communicate with employees, the local unions and management associations. Limit the information to the known facts and avoid any speculation that may lead to unintended misinformation. To the extent possible, use local first responders to assist in providing information.

If there is any EVIDENCE of an EMERGENCY such as medical symptoms, smoke, fumes, or vapors activate your local emergency action plan and evacuate

- Call Emergency Responders or 911
- Contact the Inspection Service

4 b. Q: For all—Follow-up question: Where will you get the EAP notification phone numbers?

A: Local answer: _____

Conduct a group discussion of the Q&A session to ensure everyone is comfortable with the initial actions taken after suspicious mail and unknown powder or substance is discovered; then move on to Scene 2, Required Notifications and Team Response.

Scene 1 Evaluation

The facilitator answers the following questions about the participants' initial knowledge at the start of the Scenario 1 exercise:

1. Were the participants able to identify this as an incident requiring a response? Y___ N___
2. Did they know that loose powders and substances, not directly associated with mail (such as in a swing room, locker room or aisle, for example) are unlikely to be hazardous?
Y___ N___
3. Were the participants able to identify the characteristics of a suspicious mail piece?
Y___ N___
4. Did the supervisors know what actions employees should take when they discover a suspicious or unknown powder spilling from a mail piece? What they should not do?
5. Did the participants know the reasons why employees should not handle the powder in any way? Y___ N___
6. Did the participants know that employees should also prevent others from entering the area?
7. Did the participants know who the employees should have initially contacted? Y___ N___

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8. Did the participants know what actions supervisors should have taken and who they should have contacted? Y___ N_____.
9. Did the participants know what actions should be taken under emergency conditions?
10. When to initiate the facility EAP, as appropriate? Y___ N_____.
11. When to shut off HVAC and shut down equipment:
12. When to notify the Inspection Service? Y___ N _____
- 4 b. Did they know where the EAP contact numbers were located? Y___ N_____

Scene 2—Required Notifications and Team Response

Objectives

Participants should be able to perform the initial immediate notifications and discuss the duties of the response teams:

- If required, Emergency Management Team members:
 - protect USPS employees and maintain the operability of the installation while managing the emergency;
 - serve as the primary point of contact for emergency responders;
 - provide support and resources to the emergency site;
 - communicate with key officials and stakeholders.
- The Incidental Spill Team:
 - supports the facility EMT,
 - or, if no EMT is required;
 - assists in determining if the reported powder or substance requires an Inspection Service threat assessment;
 - determines if unsafe or emergency conditions exist; and
 - assists to initiate defensive actions.
- The Emergency Evacuation Team (EET):
 - directs postal employees and other personnel to places of temporary refuge; or
 - directs postal employees and other personnel to assigned assembly areas when building evacuation is ordered.

Time Allocated for Scene 2

25 minutes

Instructional Method

Guided Discussion; Exercises

Steps in Exercising the Scene

- Introduction of the Scene
- Participant Role Play
- Evaluation

Notes for Facilitator

Many of the discussion items in Scene 2 happen nearly simultaneously with Scene 1. This scene is targeted at facility managers that will receive reports of the discovery of a suspicious or unknown powder. This scene tests:

- Their knowledge of the EAP notification procedures,
- The use of the incidental spill and evacuation teams, and,
- additional steps they should take to prevent further spread.

For Further Information

- Mandatory Stand-up Talk, Emergency Preparedness and Employee Safety
- Poster 205, "Immediate Response Actions - Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances" (Appendix A) and supervisory checklist "Response Checklist Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders and Substances" (Appendix B).

Scene 2

The facilitator describes the following scene and asks the managers participating in the exercise the questions below.

Alternatively, the facilitator can ask each table of participants to prepare answers to the questions and present them to the group.

Note that Scene 1 described the initial immediate actions a supervisor should take to avoid spreading the powder to others or contaminating the air:

Supervisory Checklist

- 1. Leave the mail piece or substance where it was found. Do not disturb. Do not try to clean up the substance.*
- 2. Clear the immediate area of all persons and keep others away.*
- 3. Instruct people in the immediate area to wash hands and other exposed skin with soap and water.*
- 4. Direct these persons to a designated area away from the substance to await further instruction.*
- 5. List the names of the persons in the immediate area of the mail piece/substance.*
- 6. Cordon off the immediate area.*
- 7. Shut down all equipment in the immediate area and HVAC systems (heating, ventilation and air conditioning).*
- 8. If possible without disturbing the mail piece or substance, document:
location of mail piece/substance Description of substance, description of mail piece (markings, labels, declarations, postage), addressee's name and address, mailer's name and address*
- 9. Contact the Postal Inspection Service with all available information to conduct a threat assessment. Call the Inspection Service 24 hr Division Number:*
- 10. Based on the Inspection Service threat assessment, follow inspector instructions, take actions and make appropriate notifications as required in your local emergency plan. Call your District Manager of Emergency Preparedness to report this incident in the Postal Emergency Management System (PEMS). This is mandatory.*
- 11. Expediently communicate with employees, the local unions and management associations. Limit the information to the known facts and avoid any speculation that may lead to unintended misinformation. To the extent possible, use local first responders to assist in providing information.*

If there is any EVIDENCE of an EMERGENCY such as medical symptoms, smoke, fumes, or vapors activate your local emergency action plan and evacuate

Call Emergency Responders or 911

Contact the Inspection Service.

The facilitator must be prepared to answer follow-on questions about identification of suspicious mail, the initial notification sequence and the role of the incidental spill and evacuation teams.

The situation remains the same. During the middle of Tour 3, a clerk found a mail piece that has torn and observed that a dark tan powder is leaking onto mail processing equipment. It was reported as in a non-commercial package and as not readily identifiable as a food or drink powder. The package reportedly does not have a return address and the address is handwritten. There are no marked handling or delivery restrictions. It is not an unusual size or shape and

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does not have any noticeable odor or discoloration. Initial immediate actions are proceeding, but you need to start additional notification procedures and involve the facility EMT. This applies only to those facilities that must have an EMT by policy, an Incidental Spill and Leak Team, and an Emergency Evacuation Team.

Q and A

1. Q: The immediate actions have been started by the supervisor and the Inspection Service was notified to perform the initial threat assessment, who else does management notify?

A: The facility Emergency Action Plan (EAP) should identify who are the designated managers to be notified; also, who will notify other local Postal response resources as required including the facility Incidental Spill and Leak Team and the facility Emergency Evacuation Team (EET).

2. Q: What does local management and the Inspection Service do?

A: Local management and the Inspection Service will confer on the findings of the initial threat assessment. If the assessment cannot determine if the powder is harmless, they may agree:

- to continue area isolation;
- that an Inspection Service assessment (HAZWOPPER response) is required, or,
- that local first responders should be called (e.g., HAZMAT, Emergency Services, Fire or Police Department).

3. Q: What does the incidental spill and leak team do? What other assistance role does the Incidental Spill and Leak Team play? May this team proceed to increase defensive measures without disturbing the powder?

A. The Incidental Spill and Leak Team consults with facility management, the Inspection Service or the Emergency Management Team to determine the support role that they will play.

Some examples include:

- If directed by Inspection Service personnel, the team can attempt to identify and contact the addressee or sender to determine what was mailed.
- Direct other equipment operators in the area to shut down mail processing equipment.
- Direct the employees in the area to go with the Emergency Evacuation Team (EET) to a location (temporary refuge) away from the spill site or evacuate the facility if required.
- Stay near entrance access to the spill to direct others away from the location.
- Call maintenance and have them mark off entrances to the area using yellow caution tape.

5. Q: Once management and the Inspection Service confirms that the unknown powder poses a potential threat, who else does management call?

A: The tour MDO or EMT will determine with Postal Inspectors that local first responders must be called (i.e. 911, HAZMAT, fire or police department). The District and Area Managers, Emergency Preparedness, the District EMT, and the Area Postal Operations Center should also be called. The facility's Emergency Action Plan must also identify other notification calls such as to the facility manager, the supporting Safety Specialist and District Office operations.

6. Q: What does the emergency evacuation team (EET) do when an emergency is confirmed?

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A: The EET assists personnel to go to, and remain in, the designated places of refuge, or assigned assembly areas if a facility evacuation is ordered.

7. Q: What if there is a liquid spill or the package is releasing visible smoke, vapors or gases?

A: Liquids: There is no historical evidence of any mailing with intent to cause harm that involves biological or chemical hazards in liquid form. If a package is leaking a liquid, follow normal procedures for determining if the release is incidental and can be cleaned up by Postal Incidental Spill and Leak teams. If it is an emergency, it will require an outside response.

Smoke, Fumes, and Vapors - any package releasing visible smoke, fumes or irritating vapors or gases is considered an emergency under postal HAZMAT policy. The immediate area should be evacuated and outside help called. (Call 911, HAZMAT, fire or police department).

7. Q: When should employees, the appropriate unions or management associations be updated/notified?

During an emergency, expediently communicate with employees, the local unions and management associations (that is - without delay and after all initial protective actions have been taken). Limit the information to the known facts and avoid any speculation that may lead to unintended misinformation. To the extent possible, use local first responders to assist in providing information.

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The questions 8-10 require the facilitator to be familiar with the facility EAP.

8. Q: What additional steps does your facility's EAP require?

A: _____

9. Q: Other than the examples above, who else does your facility emergency action plan say you must contact?

A: _____ e.g., District Management (District Manager, District Safety Manager, POOM and Security Control Officer) and Union representatives and facility employees

10. Q: Where is the up-to-date EAP contact list kept?

A: _____

Scene 2 Evaluation

The facilitator answers the following questions about the initial knowledge of the participants:

1. If there was no evidence of an emergency, did the managers know to call the Inspection Service first and then start the initial notifications to:

- a. The supporting EMT, if applicable? Y___ N___
- b. The facility incidental spill and leak team? Y___ N___
- c. The facility emergency evacuation team? Y___ N___

2. Were the participants able to explain what they would do to confirm the reported spill met the definition of a suspicious package and powder? Y___ N___

3. Did the managers know what the incidental spill and leak team does for this type spill? Y___ N___

4. Did the managers know who else required notification?

- a. Local supporting HAZMAT first Responders (in an emergency)? Y___ N___
- b. The Area Postal Operations Center? Y___ N___
- c. Others from the facility's EAP? Y___ N___

5. Did the managers know what the emergency evacuation team (EET) does for this type of spill? Y___ N___

6. Could the participants discuss what additional steps the facility's EAP required? Y___ N___

7. Did they know where the EAP contact list was kept? Y___ N___

8. Did they know where to find the numbers for the supporting Inspection Service office, the District operations and the unions/management associations? Y___ N___

Scene 3—Local Emergency Personnel Respond

Objectives

Participants should be able to provide support to local emergency personnel who respond to the 911 call.

Time Allocated for Scene 3

25 minutes

Instructional Method

Guided Discussion; Exercises

Steps in Exercising the Scene

- Introduction of the Scene
- Participant Role Play
- Evaluation

Notes for Facilitator

This scene is targeted at facility managers and facility EAP personnel who have continued the defensive actions and who have called the local responders.

For Further Information

- Mandatory Stand-up Talk, Emergency Preparedness and Employee Safety
- Poster 205, Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances, and supervisor checklist Appendix A and B.

Scene 3

The facilitator describes the following scene and asks the facility managers participating in the exercise the questions below.

Alternatively, the facilitator can ask each table of participants to prepare answers to the questions and present them to the group.

The facilitator must be prepared to answer follow-on questions about identification of suspicious mail and the initial notification sequence.

At the end of the initial assessment of the spilled powder the facility personnel in consultation with the Postal Inspectors were unable to identify the powder as a harmless substance. Based on calls between the local facility's management and the supporting Inspection Service office, a decision was made to escalate the situation by implementing the facility EAP and calling in local emergency responders. They are pulling into the facility parking lot. The facility manager has maintained the isolation around the site of the spill and has been working with the facility's EMT and/or incidental spill team and EET to maintain defensive actions.

Facilitator's Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances Tabletop Exercise Guide
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Q and A

1. Q: Ask managers to describe the available safe places of temporary refuge or assigned assembly areas that exist at the facility? Ask them what factors would they use to decide on the place of refuge?

A: Discuss the parameters that define a safe place of refuge and/or assigned assembly areas.

- These areas will be away from the site of the spill. Note: (typically a suspicious powder or substance requiring a response will be found in the mail flow). A place of refuge or assigned assembly area will be away from any mail processing activity areas.
- These refuge or assembly areas do not share ventilation with the spill location.
- Depending on the time of year, location and current weather, they locations are sheltered from the elements.
- Shelter or assembly areas have some access to drinking water and rest rooms.
-

2. Q: The local emergency responders arrive. What should management be prepared to do?

A: All employees and local management must follow directions of local responders.

Management must be prepared to:

- Guide the responders to the site of the spill.
- Identify employees suspected of contact with the suspicious powder.
- At the direction of emergency responders, assist with:
 - removal of contaminated clothing as soon as possible;
 - collection of contaminated clothing in plastic bags or other sealed containers;
 - arranging for showers as soon as possible; and,
- creating a list of all personnel in the immediate area of the spill for the 1st responders and the Inspection Service.
- other assistance required by the first responders.

3. Q: What additional things should management prepare for?

A: Management should be prepared to:

- Provide employees and the appropriate union and management organization representatives with current information regarding the situation without delay and on a regular frequency. Maintain the flow of information to facility personnel in the place of refuge.
- Provide periodic updates to the District and Area Points-of-Contact (POCs).
- Provide details of the incident to the District Manager Emergency Preparedness for input into Postal Emergency Management Systems (PEMS).

Scene 2 Evaluation

The facilitator answers the following questions about participants' initial knowledge

1. Were the management participants able to describe how to identify a place of temporary refuge or assigned assembly area? Y___ N___

2. Did they have places already identified? Y___ N___

3. Were they able to describe how they could help to emergency responders?

- Guide the responders to the site of the spill? Y___ N___
- Identify employees suspected of contact with the suspicious powder or substance?

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- Y___ N___
 - If required, assist emergency responders with removal and collection of contaminated clothing? Y___ N___
 - Assist emergency responders and arrange for showers for contaminated personnel?
 - Y___ N___
 - Create a list of all personnel in the immediate area of the spill for the first responders and the Inspection Service? Y___ N___
4. Could they describe the any additional steps they might prepare for?
- Notify unions and management associations and provide employees with current information regarding the situation on a regular frequency? Y___ N___
 - Maintain the flow of information to facility personnel in the place of refuge? Y___ N___
 - Notify and provide periodic updates to the District and Area POCs? Y___ N___
 - Provide updates to the District Manager Emergency Preparedness? Y ___ N ___

Appendix A - Poster 205, Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances



Immediate Response Actions — Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances

REMEMBER

- PACKAGE** Don't handle. Isolate it.
PEOPLE Clear the area of people and notify your supervisor.
PLAN Contact the Inspection Service and follow your facility emergency plan.

EMPLOYEES — take the following initial protective actions:

1. Leave the mail piece or substance where it was found. Do not disturb.
2. Clear the immediate area of employees where the mail piece or substance is located and prevent others from entering the area.
3. Immediately notify a supervisor or manager of the situation. If a supervisor is unavailable, contact the Postal Inspection Service.
4. Wash hands and any other exposed skin with soap and water.

SUPERVISORS AND MANAGERS — take the following actions:

1. Cordon off the area and keep others away from the mail piece or substance.
2. Refer to and follow the steps outlined in the "Response Checklist for Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances"
3. Call the Postal Inspection Service with all available information on the mail piece or substance to conduct a threat assessment.
4. Take appropriate protective actions based on:
 - A. The Inspection Service's threat assessment and instructions.
 - B. Your local emergency action plan.

(Should an emergency situation exist such as smoke, fumes, vapors, or employees exhibiting medical symptoms — evacuate the area and call local emergency responders.) Follow the instructions of local emergency responders and make the appropriate notifications as indicated in your local emergency action plan.
5. Expediently communicate with employees, the local unions and management associations. Limit the information to the known facts and avoid any speculation that may lead to unintended misinformation. To the extent possible, use local first responders to assist in providing information.

Appendix B Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances supervisor checklist:

Checklist of Actions To Take

1. Leave the mail piece or substance where it was found. Do not disturb. Do not try to clean up the substance.
2. Clear the immediate area of all persons and keep others away.
3. Instruct people in the immediate area to wash hands and other exposed skin with soap and water.
4. Direct these persons to a designated area away from the substance to await further instruction.
5. List the names of the persons in the immediate area of the mail piece/substance.
6. Cordon off the immediate area.
7. Shut down all equipment in the immediate area and HVAC systems (heating, ventilation and air conditioning).

8. If possible without disturbing the mail piece or substance, document:

Location of mail piece/substance

Description of substance

Description of mail piece (markings, labels, declarations, postage)

Addressee's name and address

Mailer's name and address

9. Contact the Postal Inspection Service with all available information to conduct a threat assessment. Inspection Service 24 hr Division Number:
10. Based on the Inspection Service threat assessment, follow inspector instructions, take actions and make appropriate notifications as required in your local emergency plan. Call your District Manager of Emergency Preparedness to report this incident in the Postal Emergency Management System (PEMS). This is mandatory.
11. Expediently communicate with employees, the local unions and management associations. Limit the information to the known facts and avoid any speculation that may lead to unintended misinformation. To the extent possible, use local first responders to assist in providing information.

If there is any EVIDENCE of an EMERGENCY such as medical symptoms, smoke, fumes, or vapors

- **Activate your local emergency action plan and evacuate**
- **Call Emergency Responders Phone No. 911 or Phone No:**
- **Contact the Inspection Service (see panel with 24/7 contact numbers)**

Current Inspection Service Division 24/7 phone numbers

Atlanta <small>(AL, GA, MS) Atlanta, Mississippi, Alabama, South Georgia</small>	404-608-4500
Boston <small>(CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT) Boston, Southeast New England, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont</small>	800-300-3492
Charlotte <small>(NC, SC, TN) Mid-Carolina, Greater South Carolina, Greensboro, Tennessee</small>	704-329-9120
Chicago <small>(IL, IN, MI, WI) Chicago, Northern Illinois, Central Illinois, Lakeband</small>	312-983-6288
Denver <small>(CO, MN, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY) Central Plains, Colorado/Wyoming, Dakotas, Northland, Salt Lake</small>	303-313-5320
Detroit <small>(IN, MI) Detroit, Greater Indiana, Greater Michigan, Southeast Michigan</small>	313-226-8184
Fort Worth <small>(NM, OK, Western TX) Albuquerque, Dallas, Ft Worth, Oklahoma, Rio Grande</small>	817-359-2700
Houston <small>(AR, LA, Eastern and Southern TX) Arkansas, Houston, Louisiana</small>	713-238-4400
Los Angeles <small>(AZ, Southern CA, Southern NV) San Diego, Arizona, Santa Ana, Los Angeles, Van Nuys, Sierra Nevada</small>	626-405-1200
Miami <small>(FL) Central Florida, North Florida, South Florida, Suncoast</small>	954-436-7200
New Jersey/Caribbean <small>(NJ, PR, Virgin Islands) Caribbean, Central New Jersey, Northern New Jersey</small>	201-714-6300
New York <small>(NY) AP0-AE (Al) New York, Albany, Westchester, Long Island, Taboro, Western New York</small>	212-330-3900
Philadelphia <small>(DE, Eastern PA) Central PA, Philadelphia Metro, South Jersey</small>	215-895-8450
Pittsburgh <small>(KY, OH, Western PA, WV) Appalachian, Cincinnati, Columbus, Erie, Kentuckiana, Northern Ohio, Pittsburgh</small>	412-359-7900
San Francisco <small>(Northern CA, Guam, HI, Northern NV) Honolulu, San Francisco, Bay Valley, Sacramento, Sierra Nevada, Bakerfield</small>	415-778-5900
Seattle <small>(AK, ID, MT, OR, WA) Alaska, Big Sky, Portland, Seattle, Spokane</small>	206-442-6141
St. Louis <small>(Southern IL, IA, KS, MO) Gateway, Hawkeye, Mid America</small>	314-539-9300
Washington DC <small>(DC, MD, VA) Capital District, Northern Virginia, Baltimore, Richmond</small>	410-715-7700

Appendix C

References

- References available from USPS Suspicious Mail webpage on “blue”.
http://blue.usps.gov/emergencypreparedness/ep_suspicious_mail.htm
- Policy Letter: Emergency Preparedness Policy, Jan 13, 2004 (available under “IEMP” on the Emergency Preparedness webpage)
<http://blue.usps.gov/cpim/ftp/policy/ep/011304.pdf>
- Employee and Labor Relations Manual - Issue 17.11
July 7, 2005 Section 850 Emergency Action Plans and Fire Prevention and Control
http://www.usps.com/cpim/ftp/manuals/elm/html/elmc8/elm850_001.html#vnameref_1
- Memorandum of Policy: Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders and Substances, May 2, 2005 http://blue.usps.gov/emergencypreparedness/ep_suspicious_mail.htm
- Appendix A - Poster 205, “Immediate Response Actions — Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances”
- Appendix B - Supervisor Checklist, “Response Checklist Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances”
- EL-810-96-1, Hazardous Materials
<http://blue.usps.gov/cpim/ftp/manage/e810961.pdf>

Certification

Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances

Tabletop Exercise

I certify that I have completed the tabletop exercise (50 employees or above) and reviewed all documentation, posters and checklists and that all necessary improvements have been made.

_____ Date(s) exercise review completed

_____ Location

The Facility Manager must submit this signed completed document to the District Manager and a photocopy to the District Manager, Emergency Preparedness. The District Manager will forward it to the Area Manager, Human Resources.

_____ Facility Manager