GUIDELINES TO MANAGING AN ANTHRAX THREAT

Extract from CAREC website
www.carec.org
INFORMATION SHEET FOR THE PUBLIC

HOW TO HANDLE ANTHRAX THREATS

DO NOT PANIC

1. Anthrax organisms can enter the body by being rubbed into broken skin, swallowed, or inhaled as a fine, aerosolized mist. Disease can be prevented after exposure to the anthrax spores by early treatment with the appropriate antibiotics. Person-to-person spread of anthrax is extremely unlikely, if it occurs at all.

2. For anthrax to cause pulmonary illness, it must be aerosolized into very small particles. This is difficult to do, and requires a great deal of technical skill and special equipment. If a huge number of these small particles are inhaled, life-threatening lung infection can occur, but prompt recognition and treatment are effective and available.

HOW TO IDENTIFY HIGHLY SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES AND LETTERS

Highly suspicious packages and letters may include the following...

- Suspicious messages on the outside, e.g., "Anthrax"
- Powdered substance outside
- Oily stains, discolorations or odour
- Lopsided or uneven envelope
- Protruding wires or aluminium foil
- Ticking sound

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO WITH A HIGHLY SUSPICIOUS UNOPENED LETTER OR PACKAGE

1. Do not shake or empty the contents of any suspicious envelope or package.

2. PLACE the envelope or package in a plastic bag or some other type of container to prevent leakage of contents.

3. WASH your hands with soap and water.

4. What to do next.....

- If you are at WORK report to your supervisor, who will call the local hotline 299-4243 and notify your building security official.
- If you are at HOME call the local hotline, 299-4243

ENVELOPE OR PACKAGE WITH POWDER

1. Do not shake or empty the contents of any suspicious envelope or package.

2. PLACE the envelope or package in a plastic bag or some other type of container to prevent leakage of contents.
3. If any powder has spilled DO NOT try to CLEAN IT UP. Turn off fans and air conditioning or ventilation units, do not sweep, vacuum, pour liquid or use anything that would get the powder airborne. COVER the spilled contents immediately with anything (e.g., clothing, paper, trash can, etc.) and do not remove this cover.

4. LEAVE the room and CLOSE the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering (i.e., keep others away).

5. WASH your hands with soap and water.

6. What to do next…..

If you are at WORK report to your supervisor, who will call the local hotline 299-4243 and notify your building security official.
If you are at HOME call the local hotline 299-4243.

1. REMOVE all contaminated clothing as soon as possible and place in a plastic bag, or some other container that can be sealed. Give this bag of clothing to the emergency responders for proper handling.

2. SHOWER with soap and water as soon as possible. Do Not Use Bleach Or Other Disinfectant On Your Skin. These tend to irritate the skin and may result in increased absorption of infectious material.

3. If possible, list all people who were in the room or area, especially those who had actual contact with the powder. Give this list to the local public health authorities so that proper instructions can be given for medical follow-up.

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This is an official
CDC Health Advisory

For more information, go to the CDC website:
http://www.bt.cdc.gov/ DocumentsApp/ Anthrax/ 10122001Handle/ 10122001Handle. asp

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HOW TO HANDLE ANTHRAX AND OTHER BIOLOGICAL AGENT THREATS

Many facilities in communities around the country have received anthrax threat letters. Most were empty envelopes; some have contained powdery substances. The purpose of these guidelines is to recommend procedures for handling such incidents.

DO NOT PANIC

1. Anthrax organisms can cause infection in the skin, gastrointestinal system, or the lungs. To do, so the organism must be rubbed into abraded skin, swallowed, or inhaled as a fine, aerosolized mist. Disease can be prevented after exposure to the anthrax spores by early treatment with the appropriate antibiotics. Anthrax is not spread from one person to another person.

2. For anthrax to be effective as a covert agent, it must be aerosolized into very small particles. This is difficult to do, and requires a great deal of technical skill and special equipment. If these small particles are inhaled, life-threatening lung infection can occur, but prompt recognition and treatment are effective.

SUSPICIOUS UNOPENED LETTER OR PACKAGE MARKED WITH THREATENING MESSAGE SUCH AS “ANTHRAX”:

1. Do not shake or empty the contents of any suspicious envelope or package.

2. PLACE the envelope or package in a plastic bag or some other type of container to prevent leakage of contents.

3. If you do not have any container, then COVER the envelope or package with anything (e.g., clothing, paper, trash can, etc.) and do not remove this cover.

4. Then LEAVE the room and CLOSE the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering (i.e., keep others away).

5. WASH your hands with soap and water to prevent spreading any powder to your face.

6. What to do next...
   □ If you are at HOME, then report the incident to local police.
   □ If you are at WORK, then report the incident to local police, and notify your building security official or an available supervisor.

7. LIST all people who were in the room or area when this suspicious letter or package was recognized. Give this list to both the local public health authorities and law enforcement officials for follow-up investigations and advice.
ENVELOPE WITH POWDER AND POWDER SPILLS OUT ONTO SURFACE:

1. DO NOT try to CLEAN UP the powder. COVER the spilled contents immediately with anything (e.g., clothing, paper, trash can, etc.) and do not remove this cover!

2. Then LEAVE the room and CLOSE the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering (i.e., keep others away).

3. WASH your hands with soap and water to prevent spreading any powder to your face.

4. What to do next...
   - If you are at HOME, then report the incident to local police.
   - If you are at WORK, then report the incident to local police, and notify your building security official or an available supervisor.

5. REMOVE heavily contaminated clothing as soon as possible and place in a plastic bag, or some other container that can be sealed. This clothing bag should be given to the emergency responders for proper handling.

6. SHOWER with soap and water as soon as possible. Do Not Use Bleach Or Other Disinfectant On Your Skin.

7. If possible, list all people who were in the room or area, especially those who had actual contact with the powder. Give this list to both the local public health authorities so that proper instructions can be given for medical follow-up, and to law enforcement officials for further investigation.

QUESTION OF ROOM CONTAMINATION BY AEROSOLIZATION:

For example: small device triggered, warning that air handling system is contaminated, or warning that a biological agent released in a public space.

1. Turn off local fans or ventilation units in the area.

2. LEAVE area immediately.

3. CLOSE the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering (i.e., keep others away).

4. What to do next...
   - If you are at HOME, then dial the local hotline 299-4243 to report the incident to local police.
   - If you are at WORK, then dial the local hotline 299-4243 to report the incident to local police and notify your building security official or an available supervisor.

5. SHUT down air handling system in the building, if possible.

6. If possible, list all people who were in the room or area. Give this list to both the local public health authorities so that proper instructions can be given for medical follow-up, and to law enforcement officials for further investigation.
HOW TO IDENTIFY SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES AND LETTERS

Some characteristics of suspicious packages and letters include the following…

- Excessive postage
- Handwritten or poorly typed addresses
- Incorrect titles
- Title, but no name
- Misspellings of common words
- Oily stains, discolorations or odor
- No return address
- Excessive weight
- Lopsided or uneven envelope
- Protruding wires or aluminum foil
- Excessive security material such as masking tape, string, etc.
- Visual distractions
- Ticking sound
- Marked with restrictive endorsements, such as “Personal” or “Confidential”
- Shows a city or state in the postmark that does not match the return address