

HACKETTSTOWN REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

Administrative Policy & Procedure Suspicious Package Handling Procedure

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Effective Date:	February 2002	Policy No:	MM18
Cross Referenced:		Origin:	Materials Management
Reviewed Date:	8/04, 6/05, 11/07, 1/10, 4/12	Authority:	Chief Financial Officer
Revised Date:		Page:	1 of 2

PURPOSE:

To provide a safe procedure for employees to handle mail and to minimize exposure in the event of mail contamination

POLICY:

The following guidelines are to identify and handle suspicious packages and letters and the steps to follow to reduce health risk in a case of potential contaminated mail:

A. Identification of suspicious packages and letters

Some characteristics of suspicious packages and letters include the following:

- Excessive postage
- Misspellings of common words
- No return address
- Lopsided or uneven envelope
- Ticking sound
- Addressed to someone no longer in the organization
- Marked with restrictive endorsements such as “Personal” or “Confidential”
- Shows a city or state in the postmark that does not match the return address
- Incorrect titles
- Oily stains, discoloration or odor
- Excessive weight given its size
- Protruding wires or aluminum foil
- Excessive security material such as masking tape or string

B. Handling of suspicious packages and letters

- a. Do not shake, empty the contents, sniff or taste contents of any suspicious envelope or package.
- b. Place the envelope or package in a plastic bag or some other type of container to prevent leakage of contents.
- c. If you do not have a container, cover the envelope or package with anything such as clothing, paper, or a trash can and do not remove this cover.
- d. Leave the room and close the door or section off the area to prevent others from entering. Keep others away from the area.
- e. Wash your hands with soap and water to prevent spreading any powder to your face.
- f. Notify the following people immediately:
 - i. Security / Maintenance
 - ii. Administrator on Call
 - iii. Report the incident to the Safety Officer
- g. List all people who were in the room or area when this suspicious letter or package was recognized. This list will be give to both the local public health authorities and law enforcement officials for follow up investigations and advice.

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C. How to handle powdery substances spilled from a suspicious envelope?

- a. If powder from an envelope spills out onto the surface:
 - i. Do not try to clean up the powder. Cover the spilled contents immediately with anything, such as clothing, paper or a trash can and do not remove this cover.
 - ii. Leave the room and close the door of section off the area to prevent others from entering. Prevent anyone from entering the room.
 - iii. Wash your hands with soap and water to prevent spreading any powder to your face.
 - iv. Notify the following people immediately:
 1. Security / Maintenance
 2. Administrator on Call
 3. Report the incident to the Safety Officer (800-238-1698)
 - v. Remove heavily contaminated clothing as soon as possible and place in a plastic bag or container that can be sealed. This clothing bag should be given to the Emergency Responders for proper handling.
 - vi. Shower with soap and water as soon as possible. Do not use bleach or other disinfectant on your skin.
 - vii. If possible, list all people who were in the room or area, especially those who had contact with the actual powder. This list will be given to both the local health authorities (so that proper instructions can be given for medical follow up) and to law enforcement officials for further investigation.

D. Procedure for Room Contamination by Aerosols

If you suspect that a room has been contaminated by aerosols or if there is a warning that an air handling system is contaminated or that biological agent is released in public space:

- a. Turn off fans.
- b. Leave the area immediately
- c. Close the door or section off the area to prevent others from entering. Keep others away.
- d. Notify the following people immediately:
 1. Security / Maintenance
 2. Administrator on Call
 3. Report the incident to the Safety Officer
- e. Maintenance will shut down the air handling system in the building.

If possible, list all people who were in the room or area and provide this list to the local public health authorities (so that proper instructions can be given for medical follow up) and to law enforcement officials for further investigation