

IV:30:01 ANTHRAX AND OTHER BIOLOGICAL AGENT THREATS

Background

The terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York City and the attack on the Pentagon in Washington on September 11, 2001, and the military response in Afghanistan to the terrorist acts have caused many facilities in communities around the country to receive Anthrax Threat letters.

Purposes/Scope

The purpose to the guidelines is to recommend procedures for handling Anthrax and other biological agent threats according to the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia.

Policy Implementation

It shall be the responsibility of the VSCC Director of Campus Police, Safety Officer, or their designee to ensure that communiqué, training and adherence to these health advisory recommendations is received by the VSCC campus community with the emphasis on the college's receiving/shipping department, switchboard mail/maintenance receiving/distribution and departmental secretaries. These departments and personnel are the first to receive and handle the large volume of campus mail daily.

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 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, trashcan, etc.) and do not remove this cover.
4. Then LEAVE the room and CLOSE the door, or section off the area to prevent other 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 **HOME**, then report the incident to the local police.
 - If you are at **WORK**, then report the incident to campus police.
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, trashcan, etc.) and do not remove this cover!
2. Then LEAVE the room and CLOSE the door, or section of 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 **HOME**, then report the incident to the local police.
 - If you are at **WORK**, then report the incident to campus police and 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 **HOME**, then dial “911” to report the incident to local police and the local FBI field office.
 - If you are at **WORK**, then dial “3911” to report the incident to campus police and notify your 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
- 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.

VSCC Source: October 16, 2001, President; September 15, 2008, President