

Oklahoma Department of Labor



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Mail Handling Procedures

1. Separate mail into two categories:
 - a) Familiar or source-known
 - b) Source-unknown or suspicious

Familiar or source-known mail: Routine handling and distribution	Source-unknown or suspicious mail: Isolate item, contact addressee or supervisor
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2. Avoid opening unnecessary mail, such as “junk” mail or mail from an unidentified or unknown source. Especially avoid opening mail that is suspicious in appearance. Such indications might include:
 - Marked with restrictive endorsements, such as “Personal” or “Confidential”
 - Shows a city or state in the postmark that does not match the return address
 - No return address
 - Excessive postage or mailed from a foreign country
 - Addressed to title only or incorrect title
 - Lopsided or bulky packages
 - Strange odor
 - Badly typed or written
 - Misspelling of common words
 - Oily stains, discolorations or crystallization on wrapper
 - Excessive wrapping tape or string
3. Mail that fits any of the above categories and has not been opened should be more closely evaluated before opening or discarding in the regular trash.
4. In the event mail from an unknown or uncertain source must be opened, follow these procedures:
 - Have the addressee or supervisor decide whether or not to open this piece of mail
 - If the mail need not be opened, discard of it in the regular trash
 - Open the mail as far away from the face as is comfortably possible
 - Open the mail over a clean, debris-free table or counter top
 - Use gloves and mask if available
 - The envelope should be opened carefully (e.g. with a letter opener) and the contents removed carefully to avoid dispersing any unusual substance that might be present
 - After opening the envelope or package, inspect the inside for any unusual substance before removing the contents

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5. If any unusual material is present take the following steps:
 - **STOP and STAY CALM.**
 - Do not shake or empty the contents
 - If no spillage occurs, seal the envelope in a plastic bag or similar container
 - If no container is available, cover the item with anything available (clothing, paper, etc.)
 - If spillage occurs, **DO NOT** try to clean it up; cover contents immediately and do not remove the cover
 - Isolate the area
 - Turn off fans/close vents
 - Exit room and close the door
 - Wash hands with soap and water
 - Notify supervisor, building security and local law enforcement
 - If outer clothing is contaminated, remove clothing as soon as possible and place in a plastic bag or some other container that can be sealed. **DO NOT** clean or dispose of clothing until the results of laboratory testing on the email contents are known
 - Make a list of all persons who contacted the letter or package or were in the vicinity. Provide the list to public health and law enforcement investigators
 - Shower with soap and water as soon as possible

6. The area should be left undisturbed and the clean-up should be delayed until preliminary testing of the mail item and contents have been completed.

If the test is negative:

- Cover the contaminated area with a common household disinfectant or a 1:10 dilution of household bleach and let soak for five minutes before cleaning up
- Wipe area clean with a damp sponge or cloth
- Dry area with a disposable towel
- Discard all cleaning materials in the regular trash
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water
- Clothing that has been previously bagged can be removed and routinely laundered

If the test is positive:

The cleanup will be performed by authorities trained in hazardous material procedures. A criminal and epidemiologic investigation will be initiated. Medical recommendations for persons potentially exposed will be made at this time.