



The National Explosives Task Force (NETF) coordinates rapid integration of explosives expertise with intelligence and law enforcement information to support operational activities. Products are peer-reviewed by explosives experts from participating agencies.

National Explosives Task Force

Suspicious Package Indicators and Recommended Response Procedures

Package bombs, which include letters, parcels, and anything delivered by postal or courier service, are not a new technique and have been used by terrorists and anarchist groups. Many of these bombs are triggered when victims handle or open the packages, although they can be initiated in other ways.

Package bombs come in a variety of shapes and sizes, and they may look harmless. There are a number of characteristics that may lead you to become suspicious of a letter or package.

If you believe a letter or package is suspicious:

- Stop. Do not handle or open.
- Do not use cell phones, pagers, or two-way radios near suspected devices.
- Be aware of secondary devices.
- Evacuate and isolate the immediate area.
- If applicable, activate the facility's emergency plan.
- Make note of the characteristics that caused suspicion.
- Call 911.

Formal Screening Procedures

Commercial or government entities with mail screening procedures are advised to review existing procedures for screening packages, identifying suspicious items, and instituting the appropriate safety protocols. If no current procedures are in place,

SUSPICIOUS MAIL OR PACKAGES

Protect yourself, your business, and your mailroom.

If you receive a suspicious letter or package:

- Stop. Don't handle.
- Isolate it immediately.
- Don't open, smell, or taste.
- Activate your emergency plan. Notify a supervisor.

Indicators shown in the image:

- Restrictive markings
- No return address
- Mis spelled words. Badly typed or written.
- Sealed with tape.
- Unknown powder or suspicious substance.
- Possibly mailed from a foreign country. Excessive postage.
- Protruding wires.
- Excessive tape.
- Strange odor.
- Rigid or bulky.
- Incorrect file or address to title only.
- Lopsided or uneven.
- Oily stains, discolorations, crystallization on wrapper.

If you suspect the mail or package contains a bomb (explosive), or radiological, biological, or chemical threat:

- Isolate area immediately
- Call 911
- Wash your hands with soap and water

<https://about.usps.com/posters/pos84.pdf>

guidance should be sought from local, state, and/or federal resources. Planning considerations should include (but not be limited to) recurring training for screeners, an understanding of the standards and limitations for operating times, and regularly scheduled maintenance of screening equipment, such as calibration, updates, and testing.

Response Procedures

The NETF prepared this document to raise awareness of package bombs and the need for diligence and safety procedures in evaluating suspected improvised explosive devices. If a suspicious package is found, call 911. Any diagnostic or render safe actions should be performed only by FBI Hazardous Devices School (HDS) certified public safety bomb technicians or current U.S. military explosive ordnance disposal technicians.

The U.S. government has resources on mail security available to citizens and businesses. More information can be found at <http://about.usps.com/securing-the-mail/mail-security-center.htm>

To report suspicious activity, call 911 or contact local law enforcement.

Suspicious activity reports (SARs) will be forwarded to the appropriate fusion center and FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force for further action. For more information on the Nationwide SAR Initiative, visit: <https://nsi.ncirc.gov/resources.aspx>.