



SUSPICIOUS LETTER, PACKAGE, OR UNIDENTIFIED SUBSTANCE (NON-EXPLOSIVE)

Directive: 13 – 110

Date of Issue: August 2017 Amends/Cancel: 13-110 July 2013

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Directive is to establish guidelines for a Department of General Services Maryland Capitol Police (MCP) response to a suspicious letter, package or unidentified substance.

II. POLICY

All MCP employees will strictly adhere to the procedures set forth in this Directive.

III. PROCEDURES

A. POLICE COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The initial complaints of a suspicious letter or package will more than likely go directly to Police Communications.
2. The PCO should ask the following questions:
 - a. Do you know who the letter/package is from?
 - b. Where was the letter/package mailed from?
 - c. Describe the package or letter and what makes it suspicious?
 - d. Has the recipient had any threats from anyone?
 - e. Has the letter/package been opened?
 - f. Do you see anything inside or outside the envelope – (i.e. powder or wires)?
 - g. Who has been exposed to the package/or letter?
 - d. Is anyone experiencing any medical problems?
3. The Police Communication Operator (PCO) will advise the caller to:
 - a. Not open the package or letter if not already opened.
 - b. Not shake or empty the contents.
 - c. Not to carry the package or envelope, show it to or allow others to examine it.
 - d. Put the package down gently in the safest place available without transporting the package out of the already affected area.
 - e. Not to attempt to pick up, or sweep up any spillage, if the package was already opened.

- f. Not touch their eyes, nose or any other body parts.
 - g. Turn off personal fans and any equipment that might have a fan (computers, printers, servers, etc.).
 - h. Isolate the package and close off the room by shutting all doors and windows.
 - i. Advise fellow co-workers to avoid the area.
 - j. Have anyone exposed but not directly contaminated exit room containing the letter/package and move to a nearby area isolated from other building occupants.
 - k. Not to leave the area until told to do so by the Fire Department Haz-Mat Teams.
4. Dispatch police to the scene and provide pertinent information to responding units.
 6. Notify the shift supervisor and request he also respond to the scene.
 5. **The PCO will notify 911** of suspicious letter/ package or incident and provide the following:
 - a. Location of the building;
 - b. Location of the package within the building;
 - c. What makes package suspicious; and
 - d. If anyone is experiencing medical issues.

B. RESPONDING OFFICER/S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The primary responsibility of initial responding officers will be to contain the situation and minimize the risk to themselves and others. Initial responding patrol officers do not have the tools or training to mitigate the suspicious letter/package. Therefor the primary object for responding officers is to establish a perimeter outside the contamination area and deny access to unauthorized persons.
2. Once a perimeter is established, obtain as much information as possible without exposing themselves to any contaminates or entering the area containing the suspicious letter/package.
3. The initial responding officer/s should:
 - a. Make contact with the complainant and/or witnesses outside the contamination area.
 - b. Obtain as much detail about the package as is possible to determine the potential risk and communicate findings to the shift supervisor and responding fireboard personnel.
 - c. Start a log of all persons entering the perimeter and obtain information on all persons who were contaminated or directly exposed to the letter/package.
 - d. Ensure potentially exposed individuals are identified and isolated in a safe location outside the high –hazard area.

- e. Contact Facilities, Operations and Maintenance (FOM) and have the Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning (HVAC) Systems shut-off.
- f. Prevent unauthorized personnel from entering the area.

C. SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Upon receiving a report of a suspicious letter/package, the on duty supervisor will:
 - a. Notify Detachment Commander;
 - b. Notify Superintendent of Facilities, Operations and Maintenance (FOM);
 - c. Respond to the scene;
 - d. Establish a safe perimeter and assign personnel to secure the area and direct traffic as necessary;
 - e. Establish a command post in the safe zone and have PCO communicate the location to 911;
 - f. Assign a Patrol Officer to assume the initial investigation into the incident; and
 - g. Meet Fire Department Special Operations, Hazmat Team and Health Department Officials and brief them on the situation.
 - h. If, based on the circumstances of the incident and on-scene characterization of the substance, there is a credible threat or health and safety risk, contact Investigations Section Supervisor and request an investigator respond to the scene.

D. FIRE DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Fire Department's Special Operations or Hazmat Team will respond to the scene of suspicious packages containing unknown substances. If a local Hazmat Team is not available, fire communications will request assistance from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE).
2. The Hazmat Team will conduct preliminary screening of the letter, package or contents for chemical, biological, radiological, flammable agents.
3. The Fire Department will also notify the local health department for incidents involving exposures to unknown substances or if preliminary testing determines a potential health risk.

4. If self-decontamination has not been performed and is necessary, the Hazmat Team will commence decontamination operations and collection of potentially contaminated clothing. The Hazmat Team will provide decontaminated individuals with disposable clothing.
5. Potentially exposed personnel will be evaluated by a medic unit after decontamination for baseline patient assessment and documentation.
6. The Hazmat Team will package and decontaminate samples for further laboratory testing.

E. LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT (LHD) RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The LHD will assist in the evaluation of the event and in making a determination regarding the exposure credibility. Determination of exposure credibility will assist in formulating recommendations for response plan and laboratory testing.
2. Generally, if the incident is determined to be a public health risk, the LHD will make contact with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Physician On-Call, who serves as the primary contact for public health emergencies.
3. Based on the seriousness and credibility of the threat and the potential for credible exposure, the LHD and Physician On-Call will make a determination as to whether further containment and quarantine procedures should be implemented.
3. Samples referred to the MDH lab for testing will not be accepted unless the LHD is involved and part of the assessment process.
4. The LHD will coordinate medical screening and monitoring of exposed individuals.
5. LHD Contacts in MCP's jurisdiction:
 - a. Anne Arundel County Health Dept. Emergency Preparedness
410-222-4495
 - b. Baltimore City Office of Emergency Preparedness & Response
443-984-2622

F. MDH LABORATORY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. In order to respond to threats of unidentified substances, the MDH has developed a network of personnel who have the knowledge and equipment to effectively handle samples submitted for biological, chemical, and radiological testing.
2. MDH Physician On-call will notify the MDH Office of Laboratory Emergency Preparedness and Response regarding public health threats and provisions for laboratory testing and analysis.

3. If there is both a credible threat and exposure, MDH Lab personnel will arrange to meet law enforcement at the MDH Laboratory. Samples associated with a credible threat and/or exposure must be sent as evidence and under MCP chain of custody procedures and therefore will be transported by law enforcement personnel.
4. Once screened by local Hazmat teams for chemicals, radiation, and explosives, the sample(s) will be packaged by Hazmat for safe transport and should be taken to the MDH Laboratory immediately.
5. If there is not a specific credible threat and/or exposure, and testing is still requested, then the sample should be stored according to the local protocol developed LHD and arrangements made to deliver the sample during normal Laboratory business hours.
6. In general, unknown substances received by MDH laboratory will be tested first for specific biological and chemical agents. If specific biological or chemical agents are suspected, requests must be communicated to the MDH Physician On-Call.
7. MDH Contact Numbers:
 - a. MDH Physician On-Call
Phone: 443-717-4778
Email: MDonCall.mdh@maryland.gov
 - b. MDH Emergency Management Team On-Call
Phone: 443-865-7833
Email: EMonCall.mdh@maryland.gov
 - c. MDH Office of Laboratory Emergency Preparedness and Response
Phone: 410-925-3121

G. MDE RESPONSIBILITIES

1. MDE will be contacted if there is a credible Health and Safety Risk.
2. MDE will provide recommendations on safe disposal of any materials not submitted to the laboratory and environmental clean-up.
3. MDE Contact Number: 866-633-4686

H. INVESTIGATIONS SECTION RESPONSIBILITIES

1. In all cases involving a Credible Criminal Threat and/or Health Risk Exposures, the Investigations Section will assume responsibility and a primary investigator assigned for follow-up investigation and coordination of evidence processing.
2. The primary investigator will make contact with the following:

- a. If the letter/package was sent through the U.S. Mail contact will be made with the United States Postal Inspection: 877-876-2455;
- b. Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC): 800-492-8477; and
- c. The Federal Bureau of Investigation, Baltimore Field Office: 410-265-8080.