

SUSPICIOUS POWDERS/SUBSTANCES INDICATORS & RESPONSE FIRST RESPONDER AWARENESS CARD

This first responder card deals specifically with response to incidents where there is the presence or release of suspicious substances, including powders/substances/liquids. For additional information on suspicious letters/packages involved in possible explosives threats/incidents see **SUSPICIOUS LETTER/PACKAGE INDICATORS FIRST RESPONDER AWARENESS CARD**.

IDENTIFICATION

- **Responders should be very cautious of any materials or locations that arouse your curiosity.**
- Suspicious Powder/Substances/Liquids spilling or leaking out.
- Marked with a Threatening Messages or Descriptions such as "Anthrax", "Bacillus Anthracis" or "Ricin"
- Titles but No Names
- No Return Address
- Some type of telephoned, written or verbal threat was given.
- **Some indicators by themselves may not mean a suspicious item or package is present. However, if multiple indicators are present caution should be exercised.**

GUIDANCE FOR THOSE EXPOSED

- Advise those exposed **DO NOT CLEAN UP SUSPICIOUS POWDERS/SUBSTANCES/LIQUIDS.**
- Turn off fans/ventilation in the area as they are leaving.
- Do not move the item or bring it to responders.
- Leave the room and close the door or prevent others from entering the area.
- Those that were exposed need to wash their hands immediately with soap and water.
- Ensure those exposed remove their clothing and shower as soon as possible if the threat is determined to be credible.
- Individuals that may have been exposed should remain in the building, preferably in room or area that is isolated from other building occupants, until they are cleared to leave by law enforcement, public health or emergency response personnel.
- Create a list of persons who were in the room or area when this suspicious letter or package was recognized and a list of persons who also may have handled this package or letter.

RESPONSE SHEET IS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. PLEASE UTILIZE LOCAL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES.

RESPONSE GUIDELINES

- **Responders should be very cautious of any materials or locations that arouse your curiosity.**
- Response should be non-emergency or "low key". This will be based on local guidelines and the nature of the call.
- Establish Incident Command System (ICS) and Unified Command.
- Treat as a suspicious item until proven otherwise.
- Establish zones of control when possible (Hot, Warm, Cold).
- Only trained personnel should approach, handle, or attempt to neutralize these items.
- Entry teams should don the appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment). PPE assessment will be determined based on the specific circumstances of the call.
- Suspicious substances should be screened for explosives and radiation prior to sample collection. Screening should be conducted according to hazmat team protocols.
- Do not shake or empty the contents of the letter/package.
- If visible powder, substances or liquid is present on surfaces, a swab or wipe sample should be collected by properly trained personnel.
- Carefully place the envelope or package into a double-bagged evidence bags or other container per local guidelines and procedures.
- The Threat Assessment will dictate additional response steps and procedures.

THREAT ASSESSMENTS

- Law enforcement professionals typically have primary responsibility for determining the credibility of the threat presented by a suspicious package or material.
- Law enforcement should make the threat credibility assessment with the cooperation and participation of the local or regional hazardous materials response team (hazmat team) as needed.
- In order to conserve first response and laboratory resources, effort should be made to rule out non-credible threats prior to proceeding.
- The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), does not recommend the use of handheld systems for the detection of Anthrax or other biological agents. If first responders choose to utilize handheld systems the results they provide should not be used as the only means of determining threat credibility.
- The Threat Assessment will dictate additional response steps and procedures.

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