

	LANE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE POLICY	Number: G.O. 3.17
		Issue Date: March 21, 2005
		Revision Date:
CHAPTER: Organization, Administration and Management	Related Policy:	
SUBJECT: Mail Handling Procedures	Related Laws:	

POLICY: These Sheriff's Office procedures are established to provide information and ensure the health and welfare of employees and citizens whose responsibility it is to receive, distribute, handle, and/or open parcels and mail at its various facilities.

RULE: None

PROCEDURE:

Attachment A – Additional Information on Anthrax

Attachment B – Sheriff's Office Emergency Responder Guide

I. Delivery Acceptance Standards – All Staff

- A. Sources that bring mail or parcels into the county/department system are the U.S. Postal Service, county interagency mail system, private couriers, and delivery services.
- B. While it is the intent of the county/department to maintain normal business operations, additional security measures may be necessary to ensure staff safety. Additional measures may include:
 - 1. Accept mail or parcels only from known sources. If staff is unsure of the identity of a delivery person, they should ask to see credentials.
 - 2. Staff should not touch or move mail parcels left unattended on docks, in lobbies, or on desks. They first should try and determine the item's origin, then contact the sending party by phone to confirm content. If staff cannot determine origin, they should contact a supervisor to determine further processing and/or disposal.

II. Staff Observations

- A. Staff in receipt of parcels or mail from any source should first focus their attention on the characteristics of packaging, addressing, or other markings that might suggest the inclusion of suspect material.

- B. Staff who open mail or parcels should be particularly alert for substances such as powder, blotters, or unidentified loose material.

III. Identifying Suspicious Mail

- A. Be suspicious of any mail or parcels different from what the Sheriff's Office normally receives.

- B. U. S Postal Inspectors and the FBI indicate that suspicious mail could include one or more of the following characteristics:

- Is unexpected or from someone unfamiliar to the recipient.
- Is addressed to someone no longer with the Sheriff's Office or is otherwise outdated.
- Has no return address, or has one that cannot be verified.
- Is of unusual weight, given their size, or are lopsided or oddly shaped.
- Is marked with restrictive endorsement such as "Personal" or "Confidential".
- Has protruding wires, strange odors, or stains.
- Shows a city or state in the postmark that does not match the return address.
- Is Foreign Mail, Air Mail, or Special Delivery.
- Has excessive postage.
- Has a hand-written or poorly typed address.
- Includes titles but no names.
- Contains misspelled common words.
- Is a rigid envelope.
- Has excessive securing material such as masking tape, string, etc.
- Contains visual distractions.
- Is leaking unidentified powder.

- IV. Processing Suspicious Mail - Staff should immediately contact their supervisor for instruction on how to process suspicious mail.

V. Exposure Protocol

- A. Anthrax organisms can cause infection in 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. Staff that have been exposed shall:

1. **Wash** your hands and other exposed areas with soap and water to prevent spreading any contaminate to your face.

2. **Remove** contaminated clothing as soon as possible and place in a plastic bag or some other container that can be sealed. Clothing shall be delivered to properly trained persons operating under established biohazard waste guideline for disposal.
 3. **Shower** with soap and water as soon as possible. **Do not use bleach or other disinfectant on your skin.**
- B. Staff shall immediately report all potential exposures to their supervisor with supervisors having responsibility for subsequent notification of chain of command, Risk Management, and Health and Human Services.
- C. Supervisors shall ensure that staff with potential exposure call McKenzie-Willamette Occupational Health Department (726-4640) during weekday business hours or call the Emergency Department (726-44440 to expedite non-business hour treatment.

ATTACHMENT “A”

Additional Information on Anthrax

What is Anthrax?

Anthrax is an acute disease caused by a spore-forming bacteria (*Bacillus anthracis*). Anthrax most commonly occurs in hoofed mammals (cattle and sheep) in agricultural regions but can also infect humans. It is important to note, however, that anthrax is **not** spread from person to person.

How common is anthrax and who can get it?

Anthrax is most common in undeveloped agricultural regions outside of the United States including South and Central America, Southern and Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and the Middle East where it occurs in animals. When anthrax affects humans, it is usually due to an occupational exposure to infected animals or their products. Anthrax infection can occur in three ways:

- (1) through breaks/cuts in skin (cutaneous),
- (2) inhalation of spores (pulmonary), and
- (3) ingestion (intestinal)

What are the symptoms of anthrax?

Symptoms of disease vary depending on how the disease was contracted, but symptoms usually occur within 7 days.

Cutaneous: Most (about 95%) anthrax infections occur when the bacterium enters a cut or abrasion on the skin, such as when handling contaminated wool, hides, leather or hair products (especially goat hair) of infected animals. Skin infection begins as a raised itchy bump that resembles an insect bite but within 1-2 days develops into a vesicle and then a painless ulcer usually ½ to 1 ½ inches in diameter, with a characteristic black area in the center. If left untreated, other symptoms such as swollen glands, fever and malaise often develop after several days. About 20% of untreated cases of cutaneous anthrax will result in death, but deaths are rare with appropriate antibiotics.

Inhalation: Initial symptoms may resemble a common cold and include a cough, chills, and aches. After several days however, the symptoms may progress to severe breathing problems and shock. Left untreated, inhalation anthrax is usually fatal.

Intestinal: The Intestinal disease form of anthrax may follow the consumption of undercooked, contaminated meat, and is characterized by an acute inflammation of the intestinal tract. Initial signs of nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting, and fever are followed by abdominal pain, vomiting of blood, and severe diarrhea. Intestinal anthrax can result in death 25% to 60% of cases.

Can anthrax be spread person to person?

Infection with anthrax requires direct contact with bacterial spores. Person-to-person spread of anthrax has not been known to occur and is extremely unlikely. Communicability is not a concern in managing or visiting with patients with pulmonary (inhaled) anthrax.

How is anthrax diagnosed?

Anthrax is diagnosed by isolating *B. anthracis* from the blood, skin lesions, or respiratory secretions or by measuring specific antibodies in the blood of persons with suspected cases.

Is there a treatment for anthrax?

Doctors can prescribe effective antibiotics. To be effective, treatment should be initiated early. If left untreated, the disease can be fatal.

Is there a way to prevent infection?

Avoiding contact of contaminated animals or other items containing bacterial spores can prevent infection. Avoid eating meat that has not been properly slaughtered and cooked. If a **documented exposure** to anthrax has occurred, early treatment with antibiotics can prevent the development of the symptoms and the disease.

What about anthrax vaccine?

An anthrax vaccine has been licensed for use in humans. However, it is currently only available to persons who work directly with the organism in the laboratory and military personnel deployed to areas with high risk exposure to the organism.

ATTACHMENT "B"

Lane County Sheriff's Office Emergency Responder's Guide for Suspicious Mail/Parcels

The following is protocol for emergency services call takers/dispatchers, supervisors and first responders to use in handling calls from internal mail handlers and the general public:

Section I

- A. Ask all questions 1-7 below, before determining course of action.
 1. Where is mail right now? Instruct persons to quit handling the item.
 2. If the item was received and/or handled several days ago – go to Section II, #3.
 3. Is there any visible material (powder, liquid, stains, etc.) or other suspicious characteristics (odor, protruding wires, etc.).
 4. Have you, your family or business (department) received any threatening calls or correspondence?
 5. Is there any threatening information written on the item?
 6. Is there any reason that someone would want to harm you, your family or business (assumed to be the case, if the item is internal mail).
 7. Do you feel that your life is in danger, if so, why (if the item is internal mail, is it addressed to a specific person in the department)?
- B. If **YES** (general public) to any of 1-7 go to **Section 2**
- C. If **NO** (general public) to 1-7 above:
 1. Ask if the mail has been opened?
 - a. If **NO**, refer the complainant all to the U. S Post Office (800-275-8777) or follow procedures for **YES** below.
 - b. If **YES**, without touching the item again, have them describe what was inside the letter or package. See #2 above.
 - (1) Advise the person to triple plastic bag the item and throw it away.

- (2) Advise to wash hands and exposed areas with soap and water.
- (3) If the person feels the need, advise to call their health care provider or the Health Department.
- (4) If the person insists, advise they may have the item tested at a laboratory of their choosing and at their own cost.

Section II

- A. If material is present;
 1. Have the complainant (employee) set the item down and cover with a plastic bag, trash can, etc.
 2. Complete threat assessment (questions 1-7 above).
 3. Call for HAZMAT response.
 4. Dampen the potentially contaminated area or article of clothing lightly, and remove potentially contaminated clothing and triple bag in plastic bags.
 5. Wash hands and affected areas with soap and water.
 6. Shower with soap and water as soon as possible.
 7. Consult with FBI (541) 343-5222 and Health Department.
- B. If no material present, in a threat setting.
 1. Have the complainant (employee) set the item down.
 2. Complete the threat assessment (questions 1-7 above).
 3. Dispatch a deputy.
 4. Have complainant triple bag item in plastic.
 5. Have complainant wash hands with soap and water.
 6. Consult with FBI (541) 343-5222 and Health Department