

Suspicious Mail Awareness

Harvard University receives many types of packages and letters each day. Mail handlers who receive mail that they have suspicions about should contact Harvard University Police (5-1212) **immediately**. If you encounter a suspicious package or letter, your best protection is your knowledge of the types of mail you normally handle and your awareness of some of the following procedures:

If you identify a suspicious letter or package:

If the item is highly suspicious (e.g. obvious contamination or specific written threats):

- Do not open
- Avoid further handling and isolate item as best possible
- Evacuate the area, close the room and prevent further access
- Wash your hands immediately with soap and water
- Call the Harvard University Police Department and follow their instructions and wait for their arrival.

Awareness of what may be suspicious:

Please understand that your knowledge of the types of mail your department receives will help you to identify what is out of the ordinary. Suspicious traits include, but are not limited to:

- Envelopes sealed with tape
- Handwritten or poorly typed addresses, especially those in hand printed block lettering
- Incorrect or non-existent departments or position titles
- Misspelling of common words
- Powders, oily stains, discolorations or strange odors
- Unusual or unverifiable return addresses
- Restrictive endorsements such as “Personal”, “Confidential” or “Addressee Only”
- Mail that is inconsistent with the types of mail normally received

Again, knowing the type of mail that your department receives will help you to determine what is “suspicious”.

HUPD Cambridge/Allston Campus – 495.1212 Longwood Campus – 432.1212. The HUPD website regarding safe mail handling: http://www.hupd.harvard.edu/suspicious_mail_and_packages.php

The United States Postal Inspection Department may be called by HUPD to assist in the investigation and assessment of the level of threat.

The United States Postal Service has increased security procedures at all of their facilities. For additional information, refer to the *Suspicious Mail* and *Safe Mail Handling* fact-sheets from both the USPS and the Department of Homeland Security. Mail Center managers may want to post these guidelines for their employees.

http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/isc_safe_mail_handling-2007.pdf

<http://www.usps.com/communications/news/security/suspiciousmail.htm>