



# Suspicious Items and Mail – Guidance

When dealing with suspicious items apply the **4 C's procedure**:

## 1. **CONFIRM** whether or not the item exhibits recognisably suspicious characteristics

The **HOT** procedure may be used to inform your judgement.

Is it **HIDDEN**?

- Has the item been deliberately concealed or is it obviously hidden from view?

**OBVIOUSLY** suspicious?

- Does it have wires, circuit boards, batteries, tape, liquids or putty-like substances visible?
- Do you think the item poses an immediate threat to life?

**TYPICAL** - Is the item typical of what you would expect to find in this location?

- Most lost property is found in locations where people congregate. Ask nearby staff/students if anyone has left the item.

If the item is assessed to be unattended rather than suspicious, examine further before treating as lost property.

However, if H-O-T leads you to believe the item is suspicious, apply the 4Cs

## 2. **CLEAR** the immediate area

- Do not touch it.
- Take charge and move people away to a safe distance. Even for a small item move at least 100m away from the item starting from the centre and moving out. For larger suspicious items, guidance is to move over 400m away.
- Keep yourself and other people out of line of sight of the item. It is a broad rule, but generally if you cannot see the item then you are better protected from it.
- Think about what you can hide behind. Pick something substantial and keep away from glass such as windows and sky-lights.
- Cordon off the area.

## 3. **COMMUNICATE**

- **Call Campus Services immediately.** They will notify Police and begin to manage the incident.
- Do not use radios within 15 metres.

## 4. **CONTROL** access to the cordoned area

- Nobody should be able to approach the area until it is deemed safe.
- Try and keep eyewitnesses nearby so the emergency services can talk to them.

## How to identify a suspicious package, indicators to suspicious deliveries/mail

General indicators that delivered items may be of concern include:

- Unexpected items, especially if hand delivered.
- Poorly or inaccurately addressed, address printed unevenly or unusually.
- Unfamiliar writing or unusual style.

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- Unusual postmark or no postmark.
  - More stamps than needed for size or weight of package.
  - Marked 'to be opened only by...' or 'Personal' or 'Confidential'.
  - Unexpected or unusual origin (postmark and/or return address).
  - Labelling or excessive sealing that encourages opening at a particular end or in a particular way.
  - Envelope flap stuck down completely (normally gummed envelope flaps leave slight gaps at edges).
  - No return address or return address that cannot be verified.
  - Greasy or oily stains emanating from the package.
  - Odours emanating from the package.
  - Oddly shaped or lopsided.
  - A padded envelope (Jiffy Bag) or other bulky package.
  - Additional inner envelope or other contents that may be difficult to remove.

### **Explosive or Incendiary Indicators**

Rough handling through the postal system means an item received is unlikely to detonate if moved. Any attempt at opening it may set it off or release the contents.

- Unusually heavy or uneven weight distribution.
- Small hole(s) in the envelope or wrapping.

### **Chemical Biological or Radiological (CBR) Indicators**

Additional indicators include:

- Powders or liquids emanating from the package.
- Wrapping stained by liquid leakage.
- Unexpected items or materials found in the package on opening (loose or in a container) such as powdered, crystalline or granular solids; liquids; sticky substances or residues.
- Unexpected odours observed on opening.
- Sudden onset of illness or irritation of skin, eyes and nose.

### **Actions upon discovery of any suspicious delivered item**

- Avoid unnecessary handling.
- If you are holding the item, put it down on a cleared flat surface.
- Keep it separate so it is easily identifiable.
- Do not move it.

### **Move away immediately – (Secure the room to prevent unauthorised access)**

- Clear immediate area and each adjacent room, including rooms above and below.
- If there is any suggestion of chemical, biological or radiological materials, move those directly affected to a safe location close to the incident - keep these individuals separate from those not involved.
- Prevent others approaching or accessing the cleared areas.
- Do not use mobile phones or two-way radios in the cleared area or within 15 metres of the suspect package.
- Communicate regularly with staff, visitors and the public.

### **Notify police**

- If the item has been opened, or partially opened prior to being deemed suspicious, it is vital that this is communicated to the police.
  - Ensure informants and witnesses remain available to brief the police, and that the accuracy of their observations is preserved.
  - Encourage witnesses to immediately record their observations in writing, and discourage them from discussing the incident or their observations with others prior to the arrival of the police.
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