

October 17, 2001  
EP - 576

TO: ALL CHIEF OFFICERS  
ALL ADMINISTRATIVE SITES

FROM: DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF DARRELL D. HIGUCHI

SUBJECT: **RESPONSE TO SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES AND LETTERS**

DISPOSITION: RETAIN IN BRIEFING MANUAL UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Recent news reports have indicated that as many as four people in Florida, New York, and Washington, D.C., may have been exposed to either the cutaneous or respiratory forms of the bacteria *anthrax*. In each of the cases, the suspected mode of delivery for the bacteria has been through letters or parcels and delivered by way of the U.S. Postal Service or other courier services. Presently the United States Department of Justice (DoJ) has not tied the anthrax exposure cases to the United States/Coalition Nations war on terrorism in Afghanistan and has launched an extensive criminal investigation.

Since the cases in Florida, New York, and Washington, D.C. have been reported, first responder law and fire agencies within the Los Angeles County Operational Area have received numerous calls for service to address the receipt of "suspicious" packages and/or envelopes. Although the word "suspicious" can be a subjective description, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has issued to the American public an advisory for evaluating "suspicious" letters and packages (see attachment). The attachment can be found on the official FBI web site @ <http://www.fbi.gov>.

**DISPATCH PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING "SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES/LETTERS"**

As indicated in the FBI advisory, those receiving a suspicious letter or package shall follow a simple assessment process, which if proven to fit any of the criteria to heighten the recipients suspicion, and shall call 911 for further direction. Therefore, in cooperation with this FBI advisory, FCCF personnel have been provided the "Dispatch Procedures For Addressing Suspicious Package/Letters" directive (see attachment).

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As the attached dispatch directive indicates, the call type "SPACK" (suspicious package) has been created as a tool specifically aimed at providing the public with the most appropriate service to address their suspicions. To fulfill this objective, a series of questions have been developed (in corroboration with the FBI advisement) that will be asked the caller by dispatch personnel. The line of questioning will ultimately lead dispatch personnel to the right call type and the dispatch of appropriate resources and staffing.

In some cases, as the dispatch directive indicates, the line of questioning may result in the dispatch personnel concluding that a "hazardous materials" or "bomb threat" response is most appropriate. Preliminarily in these instances, a standard response/call type will be initiated until further reports from those units arriving on-scene are announced.

### **SUSPICIOUS LETTERS AND PACKAGES AT ADMINISTRATIVE SITES**

Citizens who receive suspicious letters and packages at their home or business should be encouraged NOT to bring them to local fire or police stations for analysis. Instead, they are urged to call 9-1-1 for further direction. On the other hand, should a citizen unknowingly bring such an object to a County of Los Angeles administrative site, the following procedure shall be followed:

- ◆ Station personnel shall ensure that the package is left outside of the administrative site
- ◆ Call FCCF and explain situation
- ◆ Follow FCCF direction

Alternatively, should any Department member(s) at any County of Los Angeles administrative site receive a "suspicious package" (see attached FBI advisement) via U.S. mail or other courier, they are advised to do the following:

- ◆ Ensure that the package is placed in an isolated location and secured
- ◆ Call FCCF and explain situation
- ◆ Follow FCCF direction

### **FIELD RESPONSE TO SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE/LETTER – "POWDERY SUBSTANCE"**

When field personnel are dispatched to assist citizens in addressing suspicious packages/letters that have a "powdery substance" in or upon them, the following actions shall be taken:

**NOTE: NOTE: ALL PERSONNEL SHALL DON PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT APPROPRIATE TO THEIR LEVEL OF RISK AND INVOLVEMENT WITH THE INCIDENT. IF REQUIRED TO GATHER SAMPLE(S) OR ASSIST AFFECTED VICTIM(S) THAT HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO POSSIBLE ANTHRAX OR WHITE POWDERY SUBSTANCES, ENTRY PERSONNEL SHALL DON A MINIMUM OF LEVEL C PROTECTION, INCLUDING SCBA AND LATEX GLOVES. UPON THE CONCLUSION OF THE INCIDENT, ALL DISPOSABLE GLOVES SHALL BE DISCARDED APPROPRIATELY AND ALL TURN OUT CLOTHING SHALL BE RINSED WITH WATER.**

- ◆ Upon arrival at scene, locate the reporting party
- ◆ Identify the location of the suspicious letter/package
- ◆ Ensure the safety and well-being of all those who have come in contact with/touched the letter/substance
- ◆ Ensure that all who have come in contact with the letter/package wash hands and other exposed skin surfaces.

**NOTE: THE REMOVAL OF ALL CLOTHING AND FULL BODY DECONTAMINATION IS NOT WARRANTED FOR PERSONS WHOSE HANDS HAVE COME IN CONTACT WITH POWDERY SUBSTANCES AND PRESENT WITH NO OBVIOUS AILMENTS, INJURIES OR MEDICAL COMPLAINTS**

**NOTE: IN MOST CIRCUMSTANCES, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A 300 FT. PERIMETER AND COMPLETE EVACUATIONS OF BUSINESSES AND OCCUPANCIES IS NOT WARRANTED WHEN ADDRESSING POWDERY SUBSTANCES IN SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES AND LETTERS.**

- ◆ Establish a personnel roster listing the name, address and phone number of those who have touched the letter/package/substance
- ◆ Provide each person who has come in contact with substance/letter/package with a copy of the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services "Health and Safety (Medical Exposure) Advisory" (see attachment)
- ◆ Await the arrival of Health Haz Mat Team
- Health Haz Mat Team members shall address the substance/letter/package using standard operating procedures and protocol

- Health Haz Mat Team members shall place samples of the substance/letter/package in an appropriate container along with a copy of the of the personnel roster
- Health Haz Mat Team members shall deliver the sample to the appropriate testing/laboratory facility (Public Health Laboratory, 313 No. Figueroa, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Los Angeles)

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All personnel are reminded to use standard operating procedures for addressing all other incidents, including responses to bomb threats, emergency medical aid or assistance, liquid/aerosol/gas type hazardous materials spills, etc.

Should you have any questions regarding this directive, please contact Battalion Chief Ron Watson at (323) 881-2389.

DDH:rdw  
RD-001-01

Attachment

**ALL PERSONNEL SHALL READ AND INITIAL**  
"A" "B" "C"

## DISPATCH CALL TYPES

- <SPACK>                    SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE (No reported victims)  
                                  1 Engine  
                                  1 Battalion Chief  
                                  1 Health HM Team
- <SPACKI>                    SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE – INDIVIDUAL (1-5 victims)  
                                  1 Engine  
                                  1 Paramedic Squad  
                                  1 HazMat Task Force  
                                  1 Health HM Team,  
                                  2 Ambulance  
                                  1 Battalion Chief
- <SPACKS>                    SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE – SMALL (5-10 victims)  
                                  2 Engine  
                                  2 Paramedic Rescue Squad  
                                  1 HazMat Task Force  
                                  1 Health HM Team  
                                  3 Ambulance  
                                  1 Battalion Chief
- <SPACKM> :                    SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE – MEDIUM (11-15 victims)  
                                  6 Engine  
                                  3 Rescue Squad  
                                  1 HazMat Task Force  
                                  1 Health HM Unit  
                                  7 Ambulance  
                                  1 Battalion Chief
- <SPACKL> :                    SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE – LARGE (15-20 victims)  
                                  6 Engine  
                                  3 Rescue Squad  
                                  1 HazMat Task Force  
                                  1 Health HM Unit  
                                  7 Ambulance  
                                  1 Battalion Chief
- <BOMB> :                    BOMB THREAT  
                                  1 Engine  
                                  1 Battalion Chief
- <HM > :                    HAZARDOUS MATERIALS  
                                  2 Engine  
                                  1 Haz Mat Task Force  
                                  1 Rescue Squad  
                                  1 Battalion Chief

## HEALTH AND SAFETY (MEDICAL EXPOSURE) ADVISORY

It is our understanding that you may have been exposed to a hazardous agent. Health and Law Enforcement authorities believe that this incident is likely to be a hoax. These precautions are intended to protect against the slight chance that a real agent was involved. If it is determined that a real agent was involved, you will be notified immediately. The field information form you filled out allows us to make this notification if necessary.

If notified, you will be treated with antibiotics to prevent illness. If the agent were real, symptoms would usually develop within two to six days. Problems to look out for are flu symptoms including cough and fever over 100.5 degrees, muscle aches, and chest pain.

*If you have these symptoms, or have any concerns over the next 72 hours, please call the L.A. County Department of Health Services, Acute Communicable Disease Control at 213-240-7941 (after hours or weekends call 213-974-1234).*

# FBI *Advisory*

**If you receive a suspicious letter or package**

**What should you do?**

- 1** Handle with care  
Don't shake or bump
- 2** Isolate and look for indicators
- 3** Don't Open, Smell or Taste
- 4** Treat it as Suspect!  
Call 911



- No Return Address, Restrictive Markings
- Possibly Mailed from a Foreign Country
- Excessive Postage
- Mis spelled Words
- Addressed to Title Only or Incorrect Title
- Badly typed or written
- Protruding Wires
- Lopsided or Uneven
- Rigid or Bulky
- Strange Odor
- Wrong Title with Name
- Dirt Stains, Discolorations, or Crystallization on Wrapper
- Excessive Tape or String

## If parcel is open and/or a threat is identified...

### For a Bomb

Evacuate Immediately  
Call 911 (Police)  
Contact local FBI

### For Radiological

Limit Exposure - Don't Handle  
Distance (Evacuate area)  
Shield yourself from object  
Call 911 (Police)  
Contact local FBI

### For Biological or Chemical

Isolate - Don't Handle  
Call 911 (Police)  
Wash your hands with soap and warm water  
Contact local FBI



Police Department \_\_\_\_\_

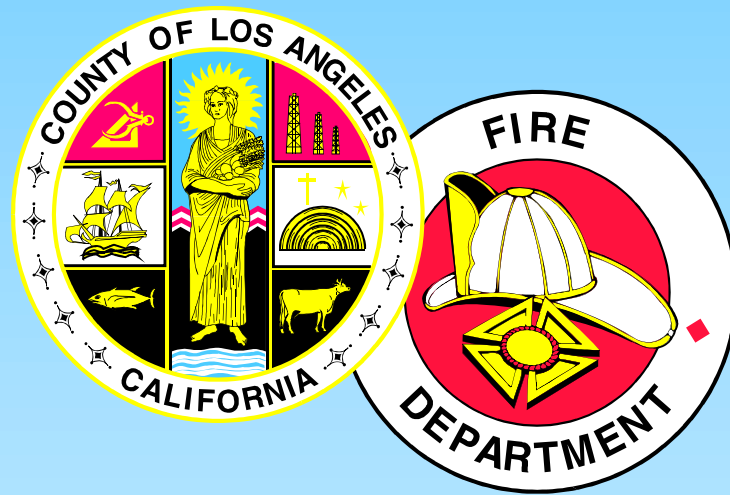
Fire Department \_\_\_\_\_

Local FBI Office \_\_\_\_\_

(Ask for the Duty Agent, Special Agent Bomb Technician, or Weapons of Mass Destruction Coordinator)



# DISPATCH PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE/LETTER OR MATERIAL



To be used for all calls coming from the public,  
other fire agencies or law enforcement.

# DISPATCH PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE/LETTER OR MATERIAL

- Do not shake or bump the package
- Do not open, smell or taste the contents

- Is the package leaking liquid, powder, aerosol or gas ?
- Is there a protrusion of wires or do you suspect a bomb?
- Visible/uncontained material?

**NO**

- Isolate the package to its immediate area
- Isolate those who have touched package from others
- Keep others away from the package
- Wash hands and other exposed surfaces with water
- Record names of all who have touched the package
- Await Fire/Law/Health Department Assistance

**Dispatch Action  
MATRIX A  
And notify  
SFD/HFD**

**YES**

- Are people in the area of the package sick, injured or dead ?

**NO**

- Isolate the package to its immediate area
- Isolate those who have touched package from others
- Keep others away from the package
- Wash hands and other exposed surfaces with water
- Record names of all who have touched the package
- Await Fire/Law/Health Department Assistance

**Dispatch Action  
MATRIX B  
And notify  
SFD/HFD**

**YES**

How many people are affected ?

**1-5 Victims**

Enter a  
<SPACKI> call  
-AND-  
Notify SFD/HFD  
-AND-  
CODE-T

**5-10 Victims**

Enter a  
<SPACKS> call  
-AND-  
Notify SFD/HFD  
-AND-  
CODE-T

**11-15 Victims**

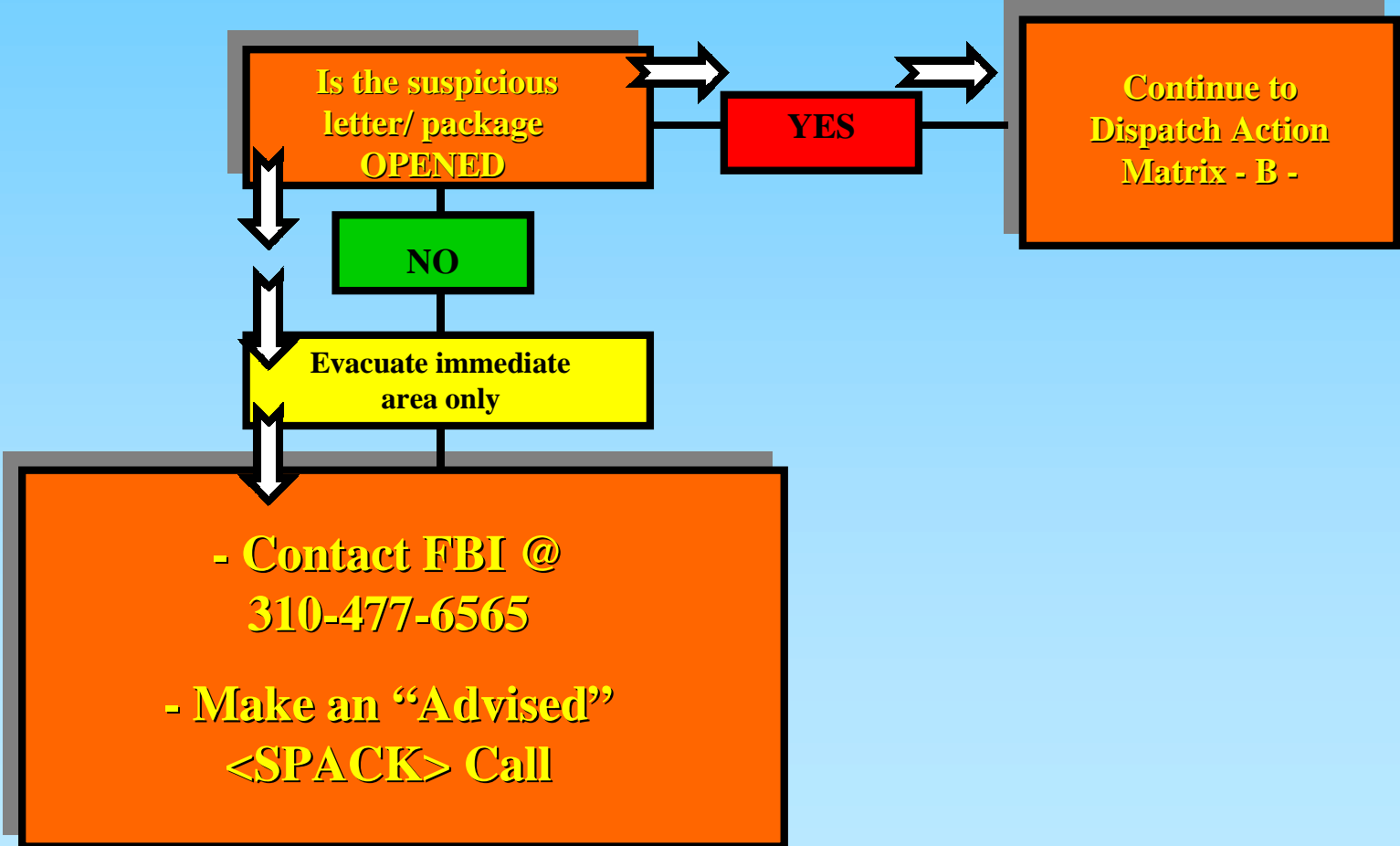
Enter a  
<SPACKM> call  
-AND-  
Notify SFD/HFD  
-AND-  
CODE-T

**15 + Victims**

Enter a  
<SPACKL> call  
-AND-  
Notify SFD/HFD  
-AND-  
CODE-T

- Isolate the package its immediate area
- Isolate those who have touched the package from others
- Keep others away from the package
- Wash hands and other exposed surfaces with water
- Remove clothing if necessary
- Record names of all who have touched the package
- Await Fire/Law/Health Department Assistance

**Dispatch Action  
MATRIX - A -**



# Dispatch Action

## MATRIX - B -

IS THE PACKAGE/ MATERIAL A ...

**Powdery Substance -  
delivered by mail**

**Evacuate immediate  
area only**

**Enter/ Dispatch  
a <SPACK>  
call  
  
-AND-  
Contact FBI @  
310-477-6565**

**Protrusion of wires/  
Suspected bomb**

**Evacuate a minimum  
of 300 ft**

**Enter/Dispatch  
a <BOMB> call  
  
-AND-  
Request local  
law and  
appropriate  
bomb detail**

**Liquid/ aerosol / gas  
or uncontained/  
visible material**

**Evacuate a minimum  
of 300 ft**

**Enter/Dispatch  
a <HM> call**

**Suspicious  
letter/package-  
UNOPENED**

**Evacuate immediate  
area only**

**Notify local law  
  
-AND-  
Contact FBI @  
310-477-6565  
  
Enter an  
Advised  
<SPACK> call**