



REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
PRIME MINISTRY
DISASTER AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
PRESIDENCY

Suspicious Packages





SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES

Suspicious packages are - the packages or letters usually received by mail or couriers, which arouse suspicion due to some indicators. During the times terrorist threat level raises in response to conflicts, suspicious packages are occasionally sent to carry out terrorist acts or to sabotage important individuals and/or institutions. In the weeks following the September 11 attacks in the United States, letters containing anthrax infected 22 people, causing five of those to die.

It is important to be alert for suspicious packages. However, a letter or package containing an explosive device or chemical or biological agents or radioactive materials is an extremely rare occurrence. Following investigations, it generally appears that those packages are deceptive posts sent with the intention of causing fear and panic, which actually involve no threat.



Explosive Devices



Suspicious packages containing explosive devices can take many forms. They may be in the form of a bulky letter, a small or large package, a briefcase, or a common item as large as a propane tank or as small as a lightbulb.

Because triggering mechanisms for an explosive detonation are often connected to the act of opening the package or envelope, handling of the package should be minimized. Given that the package has survived intact to its point of destination, we can consider that danger should not normally increase if it is left alone and kept still until the arrival of relevant authorities.



Chemical Agents



Chemical agents or toxic compounds contained in a suspicious package will frequently be disseminated simply by opening the package. Suspicious packages containing chemical compounds can be identified by unusual odours or stains caused by leaking liquid or powder.

Following exposure to a chemical agent, symptoms may develop very rapidly (within minutes, sometimes seconds). Such symptoms include rash or sensitivity of the skin, blistering of exposed skin, nausea, shortness of breath, dizziness and loss of consciousness. Prompt action is necessary to prevent the spread of contamination and treat affected victims.



Radioactive Agents



Packages containing radioactive agents generally do not give any clues on their contents. These agents may be solid or liquid. These materials cannot be detected by the senses, such as smell, but they can be detected by radiation detectors. Symptoms will generally develop days after exposure. Such symptoms include nausea, malaise, and more severe symptoms, depending on the extent of exposure. In most cases, there will be no effective protection at hand; the best defence is to put distance between the radioactive agent and personnel at risk as far as possible.

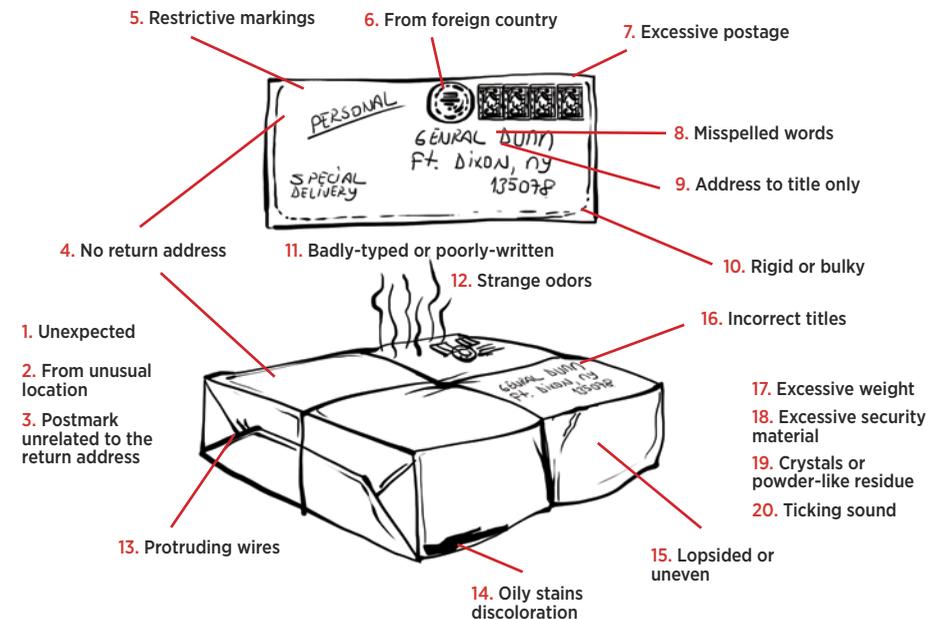
Biological Agents

Suspicious packages containing biological agents is far more difficult to identify. The biological agent may be in a similar form to harmless substances such as powders, liquids or aerosol sprays. Normally, biological agents are colourless and odourless, even invisible. Symptoms may not be apparent until hours or even days after exposure. Typically, victims will initially show influenza-like symptoms but the disease may develop into a serious or fatal illness. Packages that are suspected of containing biological agents should not be handled under any circumstances.



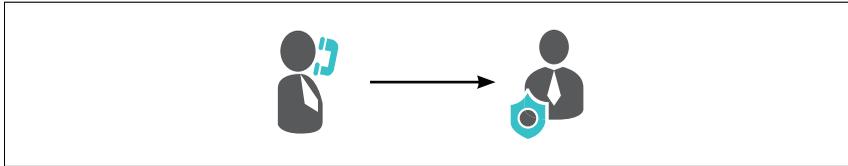
Although the possibility for suspicious packages to contain an explosive device or a chemical, biological or radiological threat is low, it is important to remain vigilant in taking precautions against this potential threat. Unless it is confirmed with certainty that the post is a regular one or known to be deceptive, it should be considered as an actual threat. The suspicious packages identified by the United States Postal Service, OSHA, the FBI and the CDC exhibited some typical characteristics. These features are used as indicators to identify suspicious packages and letters; however, potential indicators are not limited to these features. These relevant features are listed below:

1. Unexpected
2. Mailed from an unusual or unexpected location
3. Postmark belonging to a city unrelated to the return address
4. No return address
5. Restrictive markings such as "Personal", "Confidential", "Urgent", "Do Not Delay"
6. Mailed from a foreign country
7. Excessive postage
8. Misspelled words
9. Address to title only
10. Rigid or bulky envelope
11. Badly-typed or poorly-written addresses
12. Strange odors such as almond or machine oil
13. Protruding wires or cables
14. Oily stains, discoloration
15. Lopsided or uneven packages
16. Incorrect titles
17. Excessive weight
18. Excessive security material such as tape or string
19. Crystals or powder-like residue on the package
20. Ticking sound



When you discover a suspicious package:

- Stay calm. Notify your superior, co-workers and the building security.



- Do not use cell phones or radios, as they may detonate a package containing explosives. Use only fixed-line telephones.



- Isolate the package:



1. Leave the package where it is. Do not move, touch or smell it, do not taste any material associated with the package, and never attempt to open the package. If you are holding it, put it down on a hard and flat surface.
2. Do not allow anyone to contact with the package.
3. Turn off all heaters, ventilation systems and equipment that is circulating air inside the immediate area.
4. Close all windows and doors of the room where the package is situated, leave the room and ensure that the area is secured and no other people can get in.

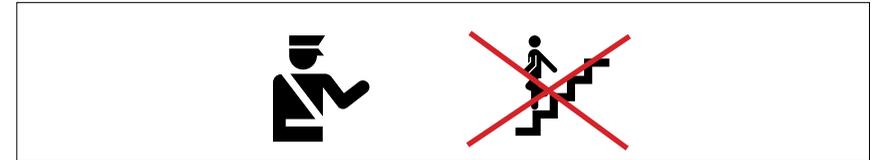
- Immediately wash your hands with water and soap.



- Call **AFAD at 122**, Emergency Call at **112**, Police at **155** or Gendarme at **156**.



- Wait in a safe place outside the room until the AFAD teams arrive. Do not leave the floor.



- Make a list of persons in the room when the suspicious letter or package was received. Give the list both to the arriving CBRN teams and health officials, and also to security units that will conduct investigation.



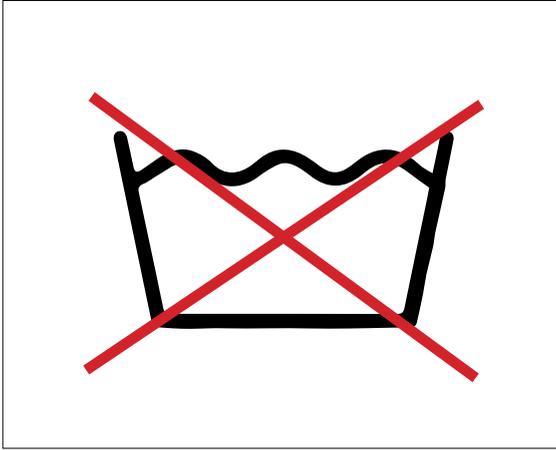
- If smoke, fumes, or strange odors are emitting from the package, or if people are exhibiting signs of illness such as difficulty breathing, activate the fire alarm and evacuate the building.



If the package has been opened:



Do not contact, smell or taste the contents of the package.



If the floor, surrounding area or your clothes have been contaminated with the content of the package, do not try to clean them. If possible, remove clothing containing the substance.



Do not shake the package or spill the contents.



Keep your hands off your face, and, if possible, wash your hands before leaving the area.

WHAT IS ANTHRAX?

Anthrax is a fatal infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Bacillus anthracis*. The disease is seen in herbivorous animals such as cattle, sheep and goats, but can be also transmitted to human. The most important characteristic of the bacterium *B. anthracis* is that it forms structures called “spores” that are extremely resistant to harsh physical and chemical environmental conditions. While the bacterium itself can easily be killed at high temperatures, these spores may survive in harsh conditions for decades. In animals, the disease develops following the entry of the bacteria into the body through ingestion, respiration or a scratch, scar or wound on the skin. The disease is transmitted from animals to humans by the consumption of the meat from anthrax infected animals, or by direct contact with infected animals. After entering the body, the bacteria will begin to multiply and to secrete protein toxins that are extremely lethal. The disease can be treated by antibiotics, but, to be effective, treatment should be initiated as soon as possible.

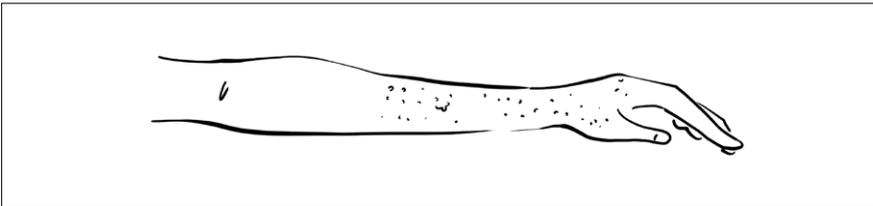


Anthrax spores can be produced as biological weapons in laboratory environments or under artificial conditions. Its ease of production, resistance to harsh conditions, and ability to infect easily through routes such as respiration or skin contact are the reasons why anthrax is used as a biological weapon.



The anthrax infections in humans result in three major clinical pictures:

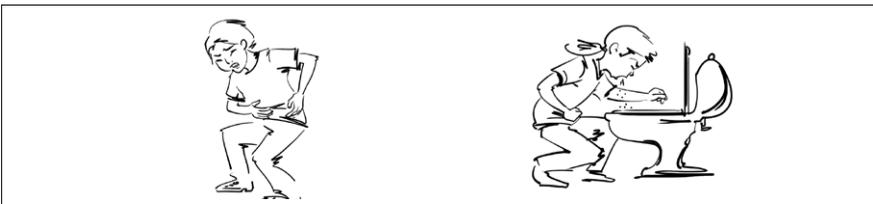
- 1. Cutaneous Anthrax:** Develops upon contact of anthrax spores with the skin. Incubation period is 1-12 days. Symptoms are pain, ache and blisters at the sites of entry into the body.



- 2. Pulmonary Anthrax:** Develops when spores enter the lungs through the respiratory tract. Incubation period is 3-5 days. Symptoms are influenza-like symptoms including fever, malaise, fatigue, and difficulty breathing. The disease progresses to coma and death.



- 3. Gastrointestinal Anthrax:** Develops when the spores are ingested. Incubation period is 1-7 days. The symptoms include nausea, loss of appetite, abdominal pain, vomiting and bloody diarrhea.



To be infected through the respiratory or digestive systems, at least 10 thousand bacterial spores needs to be inhaled or ingested. The disease can be prevented with appropriate antibiotic therapy that will be initiated shortly after exposure. Anthrax is not transmitted from person to person.



122 AFAD

112 Emergency Call

155 Police

156 Gendarme



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