



NOAA Mail Management Handbook

March 2005

**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOAA Finance and Administration
Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
Logistics Staff Division**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE.....	i
CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION TO MAIL MANAGEMENT	1
NOAA Mail Program.....	1
Definitions.....	3
CHAPTER 2 EXTERNAL MAIL	7
CLASSES OF MAIL	7
First Class.....	7
Periodicals.....	7
Standard Mail.....	8
USPS Express Mail.....	10
SPECIAL USPS SERVICES.....	11
Registered Mail.....	11
Certified Mail.....	11
Special Delivery.....	11
Special Handling.....	11
Insured Mail.....	11
Return Receipt	12
Restricted Delivery	12
Business Reply Mail	12
CHAPTER 3 PERSONAL MAIL	13
Policies	13
Procedures.....	14
CHAPTER 4 INCOMING MAIL.....	15
Policies.....	15
Procedures.....	15
Standards.....	15
CHAPTER 5 OUTGOING MAIL	17
Policies.....	17
Procedures.....	18
CHAPTER 6 INTERNAL MAIL	20
Delivery Systems	20
Policies.....	20
Procedures and Standards	20
CHAPTER 7 INTERNATIONAL MAIL.....	21

Categories of Mail.....	21
Types of International Mail	21
Procedures and Standards	22
CHAPTER 8 GUIDANCE ON EXTREMELY URGENT LETTERS	23
Policies and Procedures	23
CHAPTER 9 MAIL SECURITY GUIDANCE	24
EXHIBIT 1 BUSINESS REPLY MAIL FORMAT	25
EXHIBIT 2 ZIP CODE STATE ABBREVIATIONS	26

PREFACE

The NOAA Mail Management Handbook is designed to provide policy along with daily guidance and instructions to NOAA personnel responsible for mail management activities or to those having frequent contact with either incoming or outgoing mail. It also defines the responsibilities of the NOAA Mail Manager and all NOAA Regional Offices with mail responsibilities.

This Handbook meets all policies and procedures of the United States Postal Service (USPS) and the General Services Administration. It is authorized under Chapter 11, Promoting the Mail Program, Section 11.030 Policy, Part (a), of the Department of Commerce (DOC) Mail Management Manual which states that mailrooms and Operating Units shall take steps to promote the effective and efficient use of mail services within their service areas.

Questions and/or comments should be submitted to:

Mr. James Champion, NOAA Mail Manager OFA531, 1305 East West Highway, SSMC-4 Station 8532 Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3281 Telephone: (301) 713-2220, Ext. 152
--

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION TO MAIL MANAGEMENT

NOAA Mail Program

The National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Logistics Management Branch; Logistics Division; NOAA Finance and Administration has primary responsibility for NOAA mail. The NOAA Mail Manager has the following responsibilities:

- Serves as NOAA's primary liaison with the Department of Commerce (DOC) Mail Manager;
- Manage, controls, and/or coordinates all matters relating to mail management within NOAA;
- Ensures the provision of mail services within NOAA;
- Establishes and/or implements standards and procedures for the receipt, delivery, collection, and dispatch of mail for all locations where NOAA has responsibility for these functions;
- Ensures the use of the most economical classes of mail consistent with operating requirements;
- Ensures that, as required, envelopes, postcards, mailing labels, and self-mailers used by NOAA carry the correct NOAA authorization code number assigned by the U.S. Postal Service (USPS).
- Provides the DOC Mail Manager, as required, with pertinent information and reports concerning mail practices, volumes, and costs;
- Provides NOAA's annual estimates of postage costs to the USPS and DOC Mail Manager;
- Participates with appropriate DOC organizations in the developing of policies and procedures and performing evaluations, studies, and other mail initiatives;
- Reviews, on a continuous basis, mail practices and procedures of NOAA with the objective of finding opportunities for reducing costs and improving services; and deals directly with USPS on routine matters, including those involving operating procedures and annual postage cost estimates, payments, and audits.

Each Regional Office has a Mail Manager responsible for certain mail management services for DOC field organizations. The duties of the Regional Office Mail Managers include:

•	Providing required reports, consolidated USPS postage reimbursement data, and other communications to the DOC Bureau Mail Managers;
•	Notifying the appropriate DOC Bureau Mail Managers of difficulties in obtaining required reports and other communications from serviced locations;
•	Disseminating policy and procedures of DOC and DOC Bureaus to establish systems, maintain standards and procedures, and maintain and report management information, as required;
•	Operating mail facilities for DOC program elements collocated on Regional Office sites in Boulder, Colorado, and Seattle, Washington; ensuring all serviced field locations have mail service; and upon request, providing advice and assistance to field locations in obtaining such service;

•	Developing and implementing mail-related employee awareness programs for those sites where they provide mail services;
•	Notifying clients and appropriate Bureau Mail Managers of wasteful or uneconomical mail practices; and
•	Providing client offices with instructions and guidance needed to participate effectively in the DOC Mail Management Program.

The names, addresses, and phone numbers of the NOAA, Regional Office, and DOC Mail Managers are listed below.

James Champion
NOAA Mail Manager
1305 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 209810-3281
(301) 713-2220 x152
James.L.Champion@noaa.gov

Sandra Tucker
DOC Mail Manager
14th and Constitution Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20230-0001
(202) 482-4991
Sandra.Tucker@noaa.gov

Shirley Driver-Kinchen
Eastern Regional Office (EC42)
200 Granby Street
Norfolk, VA 23510
(757) 441-3420
Shirley.L.Driver-Kinchen@noaa.gov

Suzan Hook
Central Regional Office (CC1)
601 E. 12th Street
Kansas City, MOP 64106-2877
(816) 426-3925 x250
Suzan.Hook@noaa.gov

Nancy Kinkade
Mountain Regional Office (MC43)
325 Broadway
Boulder, CO 80305-3328
(303) 497-3925
Nancy.Kinkade@noaa.gov

Jesse Hurtado
Western Regional Office (WC42)
Post Office Box 15700
7600 Sand Point Way NE
Seattle, WA 98115-6349
(206) 526-6163
Jesse.Hurtado@noaa.gov

Definitions

The following is a partial list of frequently used mail-related terms:

Barcode: A machine-reproducible and machine-readable representation of the zip or zip+4 code which is usually positioned below the address.

Business reply mail: A system established to permit an originating party to pay postage on mail it receives back from others. (Also see Courtesy reply mail below.)

Controlled mail: Mail that receives special treatment for purposes of control. For mail management purposes, it includes mail which is significant because of its source or content and mail that contains classified or other security-type information. For the purposes of this Handbook, it also includes mail that is endorsed for an USPS special service.

Courtesy reply mail: Consists of preaddressed postcards or envelopes provided by the mailer to customers both to expedite their responses and to provide more accurate delivery. It differs from business reply mail in that no fees are required and the respondent is responsible for applying the correct postage before mailing back the card or envelope. A courtesy reply mail can come back faster because it is prepared with the correct address and barcode to take advantage of automated USPS processing.

Direct accountability: Any procedure where verifiable USPS records of actual mail volumes and/or postage costs are created before, or at the time of, mailing. All NOAA mail is now under the direct accountability system. In FY 93, this replaced the sampling of mail to determine postage costs at all NOAA locations.

Domestic Mail Manual (DMM): A USPS-issued mail manual containing information on the preparation and treatment of mail sent within the United States and its territories. This Manual can be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954.

Endorsement: Refers to marking pieces of mail in order to designate desired service and to eliminate judgmental decisions by the mailrooms or USPS employees. Common endorsements are first; priority; periodicals (formerly second class); standard (formerly third class and fourth class); The new endorsements such as periodicals and standard went into effect in July 1996.

Express mail: A relatively expensive high-speed USPS mail class, which should be used only when delivery time is of the utmost importance. Private expedited carrier services (e.g., Federal Express and United Parcel Service) are usually less expensive than using USPS express mail.

Facing identification mark: A vertical barcode pattern required on certain single-piece rate letter-size envelopes.

Flat/flat-sized mail: Mail consisting of unwrapped, paper wrapped, sleeve wrapped, and enveloped matter that exceeds one or more of the maximum dimensions for letter-sized mail but does not exceed any dimensions for flat-sized mail. The dimensions (inches) are: minimum - length over 11 1/2, or height over 6 1/8, or thickness over 1/4; maximum - length of 15, height of 12, thickness of 3/4.

Internal mail: Mail whose pickup and delivery points are within the same agency (or several agencies collocated at the same location). The pickup and delivery is usually made by local mailroom personnel and shuttle transportation paid for by NOAA. This type of mail requires no postage for USPS or private carrier delivery.

International mail: Mail sent outside the United States and its territories. It does not include Army Post Office or Fleet Post Offices, nor does it include materials sent in State Department pouches.

International Mail Manual (IMM): A USPS-issued mail manual containing information on preparation and treatment of mail sent from within the United States to foreign countries. The IMM can be obtained from the same address as the DMM.

Letter-size mail: Mail consisting of those pieces with the following dimensions (inches): minimum - length of 5, height of 3 1/2, thickness of .007; maximum - length of 11 1/2, height of 6 1/8, thickness of 1/4.

Metered mail: Mail on which postage has been paid through use of a postage meter. The cost of the individual piece of mail is impressed upon each piece of mail by the meter.

Non-official mail: All types of mail entering an agency's mail system that is not required in the conduct of official business of the agency. Examples of this type of mail are personal mail, mass mailings from commercial vendors, and unsolicited business materials and fliers. Generally, NOAA resources should not be used to process this type of mail. All mail entering the agency's mail system is presumed to be official mail until determined otherwise.

Official mail: All mail used to conduct the official business of the agency. It is considered Government property and is subject to all rules pertaining to the use of Government property.

Penalty mail: Authorized official mail that, by law, authorizes executive agencies to mail without prepayment of postage. A \$300 penalty applies if used for private use.

Personal mail: Mail that is sent by, or addressed to, individuals, businesses, or other entities in a non-official capacity.

Presort: To arrange items being mailed in zip code or other USPS-designated order. Discounts apply on qualifying pieces if certain other criteria are met.

Priority mail: First class mail weighing more than 11 ounces and on which postage is determined by weight and distance (zone rated).

Private expedited carrier: Companies such as Federal Express, DHL, or United Parcel Service, which may carry private correspondence within the United States and its territories on which the USPS has a monopoly under the private express statutes. In order to avoid conflict with these statutes when using the services of one of these companies, the correspondence must be marked extremely urgent.

Private express statutes: A law that generally provides the USPS with a monopoly to carry letters or other personalized correspondence over post routes. Currently, first class mail is in this category.

Self-mailer: A single-mail item, other than a parcel, which is not enclosed in an envelope or other wrapping cover but displays the stamp/meter mark, endorsement, address, and return address on the item itself. Publications often are dispatched as self-mailers.

Zip (zone improvement plan) code: A five-digit numbering system (or zip+4 with 9 digits to further clarify the destination) developed by the USPS to speed mail delivery while lowering processing costs. The use of zip+4 is encouraged in NOAA to obtain discounts in postage.

CHAPTER 2

EXTERNAL MAIL

This chapter covers the various classes of mail and services provided by the USPS and should be used as general guidance. If more information is required, you should contact your local U.S. Post Office or the servicing Mail Manager responsible for your location (See page 2 for a list of the Mail Managers).

CLASSES OF MAIL

There are four basic classes of mail within the USPS system: first; periodical; standard; and express. The following information regarding these various classes should be viewed as general guidance only, and you should contact your local U.S. Post Office or servicing Mail Manager.

First Class: There are two types of first class mail -- **regular first class** and **priority**. Regular first class pieces weigh 11 ounces or less while priority pieces weigh over 11 ounces and up to 70 pounds.

- a. **Regular first class.** Rates for this class of mail depend only on the weight of the mail and not the destination. Regular first class includes correspondence; matter wholly or partially in writing or typewritten; material wholly closed against postal inspection; bills; and statements of accounts.
- b. **Priority.** Rates for this class of mail are determined by weight and zoned areas of the country. The cost will vary depending upon the zone of the country that the mail is sent from and the zone of destination for each weight category. It may be used for mail weighing less than 11 ounces, but the charge will be considerably higher than material marked first class. Another consideration is that the relative speed of deliver of *priority* mail and *first class* are about the same. Within the continental United States, the delivery time is normally two to three days.

Periodicals (formerly second class): Periodicals mail rates are used for material such as newspapers, magazines, and periodical publications. The material must meet several criteria in order to be accepted as periodicals:

- The material must be issued regularly and at least four times a year;
- It must be mailed from an established office of the publication;
- Circulation records must be kept;
- The material must be printed, not reproduced by stencil, or mimeograph; reproduction by any other process is permitted;
- The material must be at least 24 pages in length;
- It must not be designed primarily for advertising purposes; and
- It must have a legitimate subscription, distribution, or mailing list.

Applications for second class rates must be submitted to the USPS for approval. Sections E211-270 of the DMM include additional instructions regarding periodicals.

Standard Mail (formerly third and fourth class mail): This is mail that is not mailed as first class, required to be mailed first class, or does not qualify as periodicals. Although former third and fourth class mail is now combined into standard mail, each type is still subject to separate classification, eligibility, and preparation standards. Former third class mail is now standard mail (A), and former fourth class is standard mail (B). Standard mail (A) must weigh less than 16 ounces and standard mail (B) must weigh 16 ounces or more, up to 70 pounds. Regardless of physical closure, the mailing of articles at Standard Mail rates constitutes consent by the mailer to postal inspection of the contents.

- a. Standard Mail - The content of standard mail would include circulars, including printed letters that are sent in identical copies to more than one person. A circular may have handwritten or typewritten items on it and may have areas that have been written over to correct typographical errors. It may also include printed matter weighing less than 16 ounces. This may also include computer prepared material. This material is not considered first class if it contains (a) specific information about a product or a service that is offered for sale or lease (b) information relating the addressee directly to an advertised product or service being offered for sale or lease (c) information such as the amount paid for a previous purchase, pledge, or donation.

If standard mail has certain items that have the nature of first class mail, additional postage at the first class rates should be applied. The following written additions and enclosures do not require additional First Class postage:

- a. The sender's and the addressee's names, occupations, and addresses, preceded by "From" or "To" and directions for handling.
- b. Marks, numbers, names, or letters describing the contents.
- c. Words or phrases such "Do Not Open Until Christmas" and "Happy Birthday".
- d. Instructions and directions for the use of the item mailed.
- e. A manuscript dedication or inscription not having the nature of personal correspondence.
- f. Marks to call attention to words or passages in the text.
- g. Corrections of typographical errors in imprinted matter.
- h. Matter mailable separately as Standard Mail printed on the wrapper, envelop, tag, or label

All standard mail is charged at presorted rates. To obtain presorted rates for standard mail, the mailers should consult with their local post office.

- b. Parcel post - This includes all parcels that weigh more than 16 ounces and that are not being mailed first class or priority. Any standard mail (B) matter may be mailed at parcel post rates. Parcel post rates are based on zones, on whether a parcel is mailed and delivered within a bulk mail center or auxiliary service facility area and on the weight of the piece. In addition, rates are based upon whether the item is machinable or nonmachinable. Machinable items are those that weigh 35 pounds or less and are at least 6 inches long, 3 inches high, 1/4 inch thick, and 16 ounces in weight. Non-machinable items are those that weigh over 35 pounds or are more than 34 inches long, 17 inches wide, and 17 inches high. Parcels may not exceed 70 pounds or 108 inches in combined length and girth. Note that in some cases, it will be more economical, both in

time and money, to use a commercial parcel service instead of USPS parcel post.

1. **Regular Standard Mail (Bulk Mail)** - This type of mailing is normally considerably less expensive than the single-piece rate. However, there are certain qualifications for this rate: it applies to pieces going to different addresses, in quantities of at least 200, or 50 lbs. There is a basic and 3/5 rate structure for each piece for items weighing less than 3.3087 ounces. The 3/5 rate structure is even less expensive than the basic, but mail must meet certain standards. For items weighing over 3.3087 ounces, both the basic and 3/5 rates are based upon the total weight of mailing, plus a minimum charge per piece. All pieces must be presorted by zip code. Any pieces not fitting into the required zip code sorts for 3/5 mail will be charged at the basic regular standard mail rate. (Contact your Mail Manager or the local post office to determine how to sort regular standard mail). Pieces may or may not be the same size as long as they are in the same processing category (i.e., all letter size, all flat size, etc.). A special fee is assessed each year for regular standard mail no matter how often it is mailed during the year.
2. **Special standard mail** - Qualifying mailings for special standard mail includes books of at least 8 printed pages consisting wholly of reading matter or scholarly bibliography; 16 millimeter or narrower width films, and catalogs of such films of 24 pages or more; and printed educational reference charts designed to instruct or train individuals for improving or developing their capabilities.

USPS Express Mail: Express mail is the USPS's mail class offering high-speed delivery service for any mailable material weighing up to 70 pounds. Express mail rates are significantly higher than rates for other classes of mail. Express mail should be employed only when speed is of critical importance. Four types of domestic mail services are available.

Same-day airport service offers transportation between designated airport facilities via the earliest available flight.

Customer-designed service involves the establishment of service agreements between a mailer and the USPS to provide customized service on a scheduled basis for mail transported between agreed-upon locations.

Next-day service offers overnight delivery between designated postal facilities or destinations.

Second-day service offers delivery on the second day after mailing.

USPS express mail should be submitted with a completed express mail form available at your local post office. The assigned three-digit agency code must be indicated on the express mail form. The three-digit code for NOAA is 259. The 259 would not be indicated if the mailer places special Government penalty stamps or uses a meter impression before submission. By indicating 259 on the form, the mailer is instructing the USPS to bill NOAA for the postage costs. The NOAA mailer may affix the express mail form to a NOAA envelope or label, which contains a complete NOAA return address and the pre-printed phrases AOfficial Business@ and APenalty for Private Use, \$300.@ The express mail label must not cover the pre-printed phrases.

If a USPS-supplied envelope or package is used, a NOAA label with the above-described phrases must be affixed in addition to the express mail label.

SPECIAL USPS SERVICES

Registered Mail: If required, registered mail provides added protection for mail. It uses a system of receipts to monitor the mail's movement from the point of acceptance to delivery. Registered mail service provides the sender with a mailing receipt, and a delivery record of the address is kept at the post office of address. It falls under the first class rate but usually travels slower than normal first class mail because of the USPS's extensive tracking procedures. It is a costly service and should be used only when necessary. When using this service, it is very important to follow these steps:

- Care should be taken that the registered mail order slip is correctly completed;
- Envelope should be properly addressed;
- All pertinent information about the addressee should be included;
- The envelope must contain a registered mail sticker with a unique number for that mailing piece;
- The sticker number must also be written or typed onto the registered mail form; and
- If the local mailroom does not have the forms and stickers, they may be obtained at the local post office

Certified Mail - Certified mail provides evidence of mailing and, if mailed with a return receipt, a record of delivery.

Special Delivery - This service allows the mail piece to be provided preferential handling in the dispatch, transportation, and expedited delivery at destination.

Special Handling - This is available for an extra fee and is designed to give priority handling to mail designated only for standard mail until it arrives at its destination.

Insured Mail - Although it is not necessary to use this service, it can be used instead of certified or registered mail for tracking. A cost comparison between the insured, certified, and registered mail should be done to determine the cheapest method for proof of delivery.

Return Receipt - This provides the originator with evidence of delivery and is obtainable on express, insured, registered, and certified mail. This service provides the sender with receipts of destination for record keeping. This is not an extra form of insurance. Originators desiring return receipt after mailing must prepay the required postage and fees.

Restricted Delivery - This service permits the originator to direct that delivery be made only to the addressee or to his/her specifically designated agent. This service is available on insured, registered, and certified mail.

Business Reply Mail (BRM) includes envelopes, cards, cartons, or labels provided by NOAA to addressees that are then mailed back to the originating source, at NOAA's expense. BRM allows mailers to receive first class back from customers by paying postage only on the mail returned to them. All BRM must be in the special business reply format (see Exhibit 1). NOAA personnel

making up new BRM should consult with the local post office to obtain a BRM accounting system format that includes a unique zip + four and barcode. With the barcode and special zip + four, the BRM fees will be reduced. Formats may be sent to the NOAA Mail Manager for review before being printed for use. NOAA offices originating BRM must complete USPS Form 3615, Application for a BRM permit, and submit it to the local post office that will be receiving the BRM. This notifies the post office that NOAA will be receiving BRM at that office. The USPS will charge an annual fee for each receiving post office that holds a NOAA BRM application. BRM shall be used only when it is in NOAA's best interest. It shall not be used for the convenience of individuals or entities outside of NOAA.

CHAPTER 3

PERSONAL MAIL

Policies

The NOAA mail system is not to be used for receiving and/or sending personal letters, merchandise, magazines, or parcels. The NOAA mail system is to be used only to conduct official Government business.

Department of Commerce policies on this matter are specified in the DOC Mail Management Manual. Pertinent cites include:

- Subsection 9.110 - The Department is not obligated to expend resources to process non-official mail. This applies to incoming, internal, and outgoing mail. Mailrooms and departmental organizations should make an effort to reduce or eliminate such processing.
- Subsection 5.040 (f) - Non-official mail, including personal mail, should not be addressed to DOC personnel at their office *except in rare circumstances*. [One example where receipt and processing of personal mail at an official duty station may be permissible is to allow an employee transferring duty stations to use the NOAA offices as his/her *temporary* address for receiving personal mail pending establishment of a permanent residence; employees should obtain approval of their new organization beforehand.]
- Subsection 9.030 (d) - Departmental managers and mailroom supervisors are authorized to open, inspect, refuse to mail, refuse to deliver, refuse to sort, or refuse to accept any mail suspected as being non-official; questionable mail may be referred to appropriate officials for their review and advice on disposition of the material.

DOC policy codified in 15 CFR 0.735-14 (a) states that An employee shall not directly or indirectly use, or allow the use of, Government time or property of any kind, including property leased to the Government, for other than officially approved activities. NOAA employees engaged in activity involving use of the NOAA mail system for non-official purposes are subject to disciplinary action, including the possibility of suspension or removal from their job.

Procedures

The following procedures are currently in effect:

•	Personal first class and priority mail received at the mailroom, including letters, packages, or other articles, will be returned to the USPS.
•	Personal standard mail (formerly third and fourth class mail) received at the mailroom, including magazines, catalogs, solicitations, or other articles will be discarded
•	Personal mail received in NOAA mailrooms will be returned to the sender without notification to the addressee.

CHAPTER 4**INCOMING MAIL****Policies**

All mail that is properly addressed should be delivered in the shortest practicable amount of time after its receipt in the mailroom. All mail arriving at the mailroom or in an office is considered official mail and is therefore subject to opening at the discretion of the supervisor, as long as all requirements for handling secured mail are followed.

Procedures

Properly addressed mail should be delivered in the following order:

- a. Express mail;
- b. First class mail, priority mail, and internal mail;
- c. Periodicals; and
- d. Standard mail.

Except under special circumstances, no time should be wasted in trying to track improperly addressed standard mail. It will be considered junk mail and disposed of rather than using mailroom resources to identify the addressee. NOAA resources should not be spent processing non-official mail. Non-official mail will be returned to the post office.

The bulk of incoming mail should be processed in three or fewer sorting operations. Mailroom personnel should make an effort to identify and deliver to the appropriate mail delivery point all improperly addressed first class, periodical, and standard mail. If the mail delivery point cannot be determined after a reasonable effort, this mail should be returned to the USPS as undeliverable.

Standards

Although the following standards apply to all of the Department of Commerce, Section 5.100 of the Department of Commerce Mail Management Manual states that Aunique standards shall be developed where necessitated by the circumstances of individual mail rooms.

- a. Express mail should be delivered within three hours. Certified, registered, and other special USPS services mail such as special delivery, special handling, insured mail, and return receipt should be delivered to the initial recipient within five hours.
- b. First class mail should be delivered within six hours of Receipt.
- c. Periodical and standard mail should be delivered within one working day.

CHAPTER 5

OUTGOING MAIL

Policies

All outgoing mail will include a return address with the name of the operating unit, and sufficient information to identify the originator's mailing address without need for opening or researching the item (see proper return addressing for external mail below). For domestic mail, a zip code must appear in both the address and the return address of all outgoing mail. For international mail, a zip code must appear on the return address and on the outgoing address only for those countries that require it.

Outgoing mail will be mailed at the most economical rate that meets the program requirements. Standard mail (formerly third and fourth class) endorsement will be applied to those packages weighing over 11 ounces and not requiring delivery within three days, unless otherwise specified by program requirements. Large envelopes exceeding 6 1/4" x 11 1/2" should only be used for mailing materials containing six pages or more. Five pages or less should be folded and placed in a letter-sized envelope. The USPS imposes a surcharge for large envelopes weighing less than one ounce.

Whenever possible, information should be sent electronically by facsimile equipment or electronic mail. Government mail should not be insured since it is an expensive service and provides little gain to Government agencies. Certified, registered, and special mail services should only be used when required by statute, executive order, or similar regulation, or if required because of security reasons.

All outgoing mail is subject to opening by officials of the Department of Commerce and designated mailroom personnel, as long as security requirements have been met when necessary. Outgoing mail must be marked with current addresses. The sender should ensure that the addresses being used are current and accurate, has a current routing code (if applicable), room number, and division/section name. Mailing lists will be circularized (purged) annually, and that data are to be used to update lists.

Improperly prepared outgoing mail should not be picked up or processed by mail personnel. NOAA resources should not be expended processing or transporting non-official outgoing mail. Certified/registered mail should be treated as security classified mail until otherwise determined.

In the Washington Metropolitan Area, mail going between NOAA facilities should be sent internally through the NOAA mail system in a SF-65-B (hereafter referred to as holey joe), not in envelopes normally used for mail sent through the USPS. Outgoing mail sent through the USPS should be sent through the mailroom. Official mail should never be placed in regular mail chutes or mail boxes if a NOAA mailroom is located in the same building or complex.

Procedures

Proper addressing for external mail (USPS mail) - To ensure delivery of mail sent through the USPS, envelopes and self-mailers should be addressed properly. This will ensure that the mail

arrives at the proper address in the least amount of time. The USPS may return mail that is improperly addressed, which wastes postage costs.

The complete address of the addressee should include: name or title; routing code; room; suite or apartment number; post office box; street address; and city, state, and zip code (zip + four, if known). The bottom line of the address will include only the city, state, and zip code (zip + four, if known).

If more room is required, the zip code may be placed below city and state. No other information, except for the barcode, should be placed below the address block containing the city, state, and zip code. Any printing below the address block may interfere with the optical reading equipment used by the USPS. The USPS recommends that addresses be typed in all capital letters using no punctuation (The only exception would be a dash between the first five digits of the zip code and the last four digits if using a zip+4 code).

A space should be placed between the city and state. Two spaces should be placed between the state and zip code. All states should be designated by the two-letter abbreviation used by the USPS (see Exhibit 2 for state designations). This helps the optical readers process the mail quickly without delays that small letters and punctuation may cause. Typical addresses would appear as follows:

MR CHARLES TAYLOR	MS EILEEN SMITH
SALES MANAGER	OFA531 RM 8653 SSMC4
ABC INC	NOAA
1576 MAINE AVENUE	1305 EAST WEST HIGHWAY
COLUMBIA MD 21045-0001	SILVER SPRING MD 20910-3281

Proper return addressing for external mail (USPS mail) - The correct return addresses on envelopes, self-mailers and letters are important since many people respond using those same addresses. The return addresses should follow the same format as the one used in the outgoing address described above. The NOAA return address should be complete indicating: name or title; routing code; room number; building code; agency; street address; city; state; and zip code.

If an envelope is used with a partial return address in the upper left corner, add the rest of the information to make a complete return address. A typical return address would appear as follows:

DOUG GRAVES
OFA535, ROOM 153
NOAA
1315 EAST WEST HIGHWAY
SILVER SPRING MD 20910-3282

All outgoing mail should be ready for pickup by the USPS within three hours of arrival in the mailroom.

CHAPTER 6

INTERNAL MAIL

Delivery Systems

Optional Form 65-B, U.S. Government Messenger Envelope - Most internal correspondence may be placed in a holey joe which is available in three sizes. Metered or stamped envelopes should not be used for internal mail. Also, regular unmetered or unstamped envelopes should not be used for internal mail. This could lead to metering of the envelope and mailing it through the USPS, thus wasting postage and time.

Special Colored Mail Pouches (Washington, DC Area) - In cases where a large volume of mail consistently flows between two specific offices in the Washington, D.C. Area and timeliness is important, colored mail pouches are available for mail delivery. The NOAA Mailroom Contracting Officer=s Technical Representative (COTR), 301-713-2636 must approve the use of special pouched mail and will limit its use to high-priority situations.

Policies

Mail runs, including mail shuttle runs in the Washington Metropolitan Area, will be centrally controlled and will have established schedules for pickup and delivery. The mailroom COTR can provide shuttle schedules. Internal mail will be treated the same as first-class mail and processed in accordance with standards and procedures for incoming first-class mail.

Procedures and Standards

It is especially important to include the correct routing code and room number on each piece of mail. The mail is significantly delayed if the routing code and room number are not included. The mailrooms receive a significant amount of mail that is improperly addressed thus requiring special searches by members of the mailroom staff, which delays the delivery and wastes mailroom resources.

To help the local mailrooms deliver mail quickly and accurately, interoffice mail should include the following: name or title, routing code, room number, and building code and/or location. Mailers are reminded to print clearly, or affix a printed label on the first available space on the holey joe.

CHAPTER 7

INTERNATIONAL MAIL

Categories of Mail

The following are the most frequently used categories of international mail used within NOAA. Each category has its own rates and weight limits. NOAA offices requiring information on international rates or weight limits should contact their local post office or their Mail Manager.

Types of international mail

Letters and letter packages - This is mail containing personal handwritten or typewritten communications having the character of current correspondence and must be sent as letters or letter packages. Unless prohibited by the country of destination, merchandise or other articles within the applicable weight and size limits may also be mailed at the letter rate of postage. The weight limit to all countries is four pounds.

Postcards - Postcards consist of single cards sent without a wrapper or envelope. Folded (double) cards must be mailed in envelopes at the letter rate of postage.

Printed matter - Printed matter means paper on which words, letters, characters, figures, images, or any combination of them not having the character of a bill or statement of account, or of an actual or personal correspondence that has been reproduced by processes other than handwriting or typewriting. This classification includes regular printed matter, books and sheet music, and publisher=s periodicals. Articles of stationery; stamps of various kinds (whether used or not); framed photographs and certificates; photographic negatives and slides; films; microfilm and microfiche; sound or video recordings; punched paper tapes or ADP cards; and playing cards are not acceptable as printed matter. The maximum weight limit for most countries is four pounds. However, some South and Central American countries accept weight limits up to 22 pounds.

Parcel post - This resembles domestic parcel post. Packages of merchandise, or any other articles that do not need to be mailed at letter postage rates, can be sent as parcel post. Written communications having the nature of current and personal correspondence are not permitted. Maximum weight limits for parcel post items vary by country, but usually are 22 or 44 pounds. Most countries require a completed customs form (Form 2976-A placed inside envelope Form 2976-E) to be attached to each parcel post package. The forms may be obtained from the local post office or the NOAA Mail Manager.

Procedures and Standards

Addressing international mail - The address of the final destination points should be typed or clearly printed. An address may be written in a foreign language, provided the names of the city, province, and country are also indicated in English. The bottom line must only show the country name, written in full with no abbreviations, in all capital letters, and with no punctuation. When foreign postal codes, whether numerical or alphabetized, are used, they must always be on the line immediately above the destination country. The following are examples of properly addressed foreign destinations:

MS SANDRA BEECHES
412 THATCHER DR
LONDON WIP6HQ
ENGLAND

MR SERGIO GONZALES
APARTADO 103
43806 PUERTO VALLARTA
MEXICO

CHAPTER 8**GUIDANCE ON EXTREMELY URGENT LETTERS****Policies and Procedures**

Generally, there are two methods available for transmitting extremely urgent letters in paper form: via USPS or via private express carrier. Both, however, are costly, and NOAA has instituted certain guidelines and methods to minimize the use of either method when it is not warranted.

The following information is an abbreviated version of the guidelines that should be followed whenever transmitting extremely urgent letters, whether sent via USPS or via private express carrier (such as Federal Express, DHL, etc). NOAA organizations should:

- Designate officials to approve or disapprove use of express mail;
- Monitor users' needs closely and restrict use to urgent mailings only;
- Plan and organize mailings by priority to eliminate the use of express mail and to avoid overdue correspondence;
- Use fax or electronic mail to transmit small documents;
- Use pouches or special containers to transmit urgent mail to same destination;
- Use the Government contract overnight courier service to dispatch extremely urgent letter mail;
- Require users to complete express mail justification form when requesting express mail service;
- Prohibit the dispatch of overnight mail to locations that cannot guarantee next day delivery service;
- Track the number of items dispatched via express mail by compiling data documented from express mail receipts; and
- Not send documents via overnight mail on Fridays or any day before a Federal holiday (Offices are closed, and mail will not be delivered the next day).

Because of the high costs that may be involved with express mail or private carriers, NOAA officials should contact their servicing Mail Manager for assistance in determining the appropriate methods for sending their extremely urgent correspondence.

Chapter 9

MAIL SECURITY

This mail security portion of the mail management manual is to help you, as a mail center supervisor, and your coworkers keep your mail center safe and secure. The following provides general advice and recommends protective measures to help you assess, prevent, and respond to three types of threats:

- Weapons of mass destruction.
- Mail bombs and bomb threats.
- Mail center theft.

Each of the three sections briefly states the definition of and the assessment, prevention, and response for a specific type of threat. Checklists and a resource list for additional information are also provided. Although the suggestions provided in this guide are applicable for many situations involving security threats, the suggestions are intended only as guidance.

Additional resources used to develop this guide include the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the General Services Administration, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms.

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

The Federal Criminal Code defines weapons of mass destruction as:

Chemical - Any weapon that is designed or intended to cause death or serious bodily injury through the release, dissemination, or impact of toxic or poisonous chemicals, or their precursors, such as mustard gas, nerve agents, and sarin gas.

Biological - Any weapon involving a disease organism, such as smallpox, botulinum toxin, and anthrax.

Radiological - Any weapon that is designed to release radiation.

Biological, chemical, or radiological weapon in the mail

This portion entails procedural responses for a biological threat (anthrax) delivered by the mail. The protective measures and responses for a chemical or a radiological threat delivered by the mail would be similar to those included in this guide for a biological threat.

ANTHRAX

Anthrax is a bacterial, zoonotic disease caused by *Bacillus (B.) anthracis*. In humans, three types of anthrax infections can occur based on the route of exposure.

Type	Exposure	Transmittal and	Symptoms
------	----------	-----------------	----------

		Characteristics	
Cutaneous	Skin	Cutaneous anthrax is the most common naturally occurring type of infection. It usually occurs after skin contact with contaminated meat, wool, hides, or leather from infected animals. The incubation period ranges from 1 to 12 days. Infection is introduced through scratches or abrasions of the skin.	Skin infection begins as a raised bump that resembles a spider bite. Within 1 to 2 days, the infection develops into a blister and then a painless ulcer, with a characteristic black necrotic (dying) area in the center. The lesion is usually painless, but patients also may have fever, malaise, and headache. Lymph glands in the adjacent area may swell.
Inhalation	Inhalation	Anthrax spores must be aerosolized to cause inhalational anthrax. Inhalation anthrax is contracted by inhalation of the spores. It occurs mainly among workers handling infected animal hides, wool, and fur. The number of spores that cause human infection is unknown. The incubation period of inhalational anthrax among humans is unclear, but it is reported to range from 1 to 7 days, possibly ranging up to 60 days.	Inhalation anthrax resembles a viral respiratory illness. Initial symptoms include sore throat, mild fever, muscle aches, and malaise. Symptoms may progress to respiratory failure and shock with meningitis. After an incubation period of 1 to 7 days, the onset of inhalation anthrax is gradual.
Gastrointestinal	Ingestion	Gastrointestinal anthrax usually follows the consumption of raw or undercooked contaminated meat and has an incubation period of 1 to 7 days.	Gastrointestinal anthrax is characterized by acute inflammation of the intestinal tract. Initial signs are nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting, fever followed by abdominal pain,

			vomiting of blood, and severe diarrhea.
--	--	--	--

Treatment for anthrax

Penicillin, doxycycline, and ciproflaxin are effective against most strains of anthrax. Penicillin is the drug of choice for naturally occurring anthrax. A vaccine is available and consists of a series of 6 doses over 18 months with yearly boosters. This vaccine, while known to protect against cutaneous anthrax, is also believed to be effective against the inhalation type.

Assessment

If you work in a mail center, should you be concerned about biological weapons?

Even a threat that is a hoax can disrupt the operations of your company. A delivery system for a biological agent can consist of just about anything that can produce an aerosol, including a wide variety of commercially available objects.

The most likely form for dissemination of anthrax as a biological terrorist agent is aerosolization of spores. Unlike nuclear and chemical agents, biological agents are not detectable to the human senses. You would never realize your exposure to a biological agent until you became sick with certain symptoms.

Are you at risk for getting anthrax from handling mail on the job?

There is a risk for anthrax associated with exposure to cross-contaminated mail, but the risk is very low - even for postal employees and persons who work in company mailrooms.

Prevention

How can you limit physical exposure of the mail center to suspect anthrax mailings?

Ways to Limit Physical Exposure to Suspect Anthrax Mailings	
1.	Develop an emergency plan for steps in response to a known or a suspected exposure to anthrax.
2.	Train workers in how to recognize and handle a suspicious piece of mail.
3.	Identify a single point of contact to open mail.
4.	Screen all mail for suspicious packages.
5.	Do not open mail in an area where other personnel are present.
6.	Have appropriate gloves available for mail handlers' use.

What worker safety guidelines are being issued?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Postal Service are collaborating to ensure that all mail handlers and postal workers are instructed on how to protect themselves from exposure to anthrax. Detailed guidelines may be found on CDC's Web site at www.cdc.gov.

In addition, the Postal Service's Web site features a General Services Administration (GSA) training module with information on how to respond to an anthrax threat in a mail center. The module is available at www.usps.com. The module describes actions that can be taken if there is a potential anthrax threat in a mail center, including countermeasures for staff to defend and protect against these threats.

Portions of the following information are excerpted from CDC's Web site.

Should all mail handling operations adopt anthrax worker safety guidelines immediately?

Every facility is different and should be evaluated based on the recommendations in the CDC guidelines. You should select the recommendations based on an evaluation of your worksite. This evaluation should focus on determining which processes, operations, jobs, or tasks would most likely result in an exposure if a contaminated envelope or package were found at the worksite. Many measures can be implemented immediately. Others require additional time and effort.

What kinds of engineering controls should mail-handling and processing operations consider implementing for detecting anthrax spores?

Anthrax spores can be aerosolized during the operation and maintenance of high-speed, mail-sorting machines. Mail processing could expose workers to spores and spores could enter heating, ventilating, or air-conditioning (HVAC) systems. Engineering controls can provide the best means of preventing worker exposure to potential aerosolized particles.

In settings where such machinery is in use, consider the following engineering controls:

- An industrial vacuum cleaner equipped with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter for cleaning high-speed, mail-sorting machinery.
- Local exhaust ventilation at pinch roller areas.
- HEPA-filtered exhaust hoods installed in areas where dust is generated (e.g., areas with high-speed, mail-sorting machinery).
- Air curtains (using laminar air flow) installed in areas where large amounts of mail are processed. HEPA filters installed in the building's HVAC systems (if feasible) to capture aerosolized spores.

Note: Machinery should not be cleaned using compressed air (i.e., blowdown/blowoff).

What administrative controls should your mail-handling and processing sites consider implementing to protect workers from exposure to anthrax spores?

You should limit the number of people working at or near sites where aerosolized particles may be generated, such as mail-sorting machinery and places where mailbags are unloaded or emptied. In addition, restrict the number of people including support staff and nonemployees entering areas where aerosolized particles may be generated. This recommendation applies to contractors, business visitors, and support staff.

What housekeeping controls in mail-handling and processing sites are recommended to protect workers from exposure to anthrax spores?

In the mail-handling worksite, dry sweeping and dusting should be avoided. Instead, the area should be jet-cleaned and vacuumed with HEPA-equipped vacuum cleaners.

What personal protective equipment for workers in mail-handling and processing sites is recommended to protect workers from exposure to anthrax spores?

Personal protective equipment for workers in mail-handling and processing worksites must be selected on the basis of the potential for cutaneous or inhalational exposure to anthrax spores. Handling packages or envelopes may result in skin exposure. In addition, because certain machinery such as electronic mail sorters can generate aerosolized particles, people who operate, maintain, or work near such machinery may be exposed through inhalation. People who hand sort mail or work at other sites where airborne particles may be generated (such as where mailbags are unloaded or emptied) may also be exposed through inhalation.

What are some examples of personal protective equipment and clothing that could be used to protect workers who handle mail from exposure to anthrax spores?

All workers who handle mail should wear protective, impermeable gloves. In some cases, workers may need to wear cotton gloves under their protective gloves for comfort and to prevent dermatitis.

Gloves should be provided in a range of sizes to ensure proper fit. The choice of glove material such as nitrile or vinyl should be based on safety, fit, durability, and comfort. Different gloves or layers of gloves may be needed depending on the task, the dexterity required, and the type of protection needed. Protective gloves can be worn under heavier gloves such as leather, heavy cotton for operations where gloves can easily be torn or if more protection against hand injury is needed.

Those workers for whom a gloved hand presents a hazard, such as those who work close to moving machine parts, the risk for potential injury resulting from glove use should be measured against the risk for potential exposure to anthrax.

Workers should avoid touching their skin, eyes, or other mucous membranes since contaminated gloves may transfer anthrax spores to other body sites. Workers should consider wearing long-sleeved clothing and long pants to protect exposed skin.

Gloves and other personal protective clothing and equipment can be discarded in regular trash once they are removed or if they are visibly torn, unless a suspicious piece of mail is recognized and handled. If a suspicious piece of mail is recognized and handled for anthrax, the worker's protective gear should be handled as potentially contaminate material. Workers should wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water when gloves are removed, before eating, and when replacing torn or worn gloves. Soap and water will wash away most spores that may have contacted the skin; disinfectant solutions are not needed.

Are there some areas in the postal setting that present a greater risk to some workers than others for anthrax exposure?

People working with or near machinery, such as electronic mail sorters that can generate aerosolized particles should be fitted with NIOSH-approved respirators that are at least as protective as an N95 respirator. People working in areas where oil mist from machinery is present should be fitted with respirators equipped with P-type filters.

Because facial hair interferes with the fit of protective respirators, workers with facial hair like beards and or large moustaches may require alternative respirators such as powered air-purifying respirators (PAPRs) with loose-fitting hoods. Workers who cannot be fitted properly with a half-mask respirator based on a fit test may require the use of alternative respirators, such as full facepiece, negative-pressure respirators, PAPRs equipped with HEPA filters, or supplied-air respirators.

If a worker is medically unable to wear a respirator, the employer should consider reassigning that worker to a job that does not require respiratory protection. In addition, the use of disposable aprons or goggles by persons working with or near machinery capable of generating aerosolized particles may provide an extra margin of protection.

Response

What are the indicators of a suspicious letter or parcel?

A parcel or letter is considered suspicious when it has more than one of the following characteristics:

- No return address or one that can't be verified as legitimate.
- Excessive postage.
- Handwritten or poorly typed address, incorrect titles or titles with no name, or misspellings of common words.
- Addressed to someone no longer with your organization or not addressed to a specific person.
- Strange return address or no return address.
- Marked with restrictions, such as "Personal," "Confidential," or "Do not X-ray."
- Powdery substance on the outside.
- Unusual weight given its size, lopsided, or oddly shaped.
- Unusual amount of tape on it.
- Odors, discolorations, or oily stains.

What should you do if you receive a suspect anthrax threat by mail?

1.	Notify your supervisor, who will immediately contact the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, local law enforcement authorities, safety office, or designated person.
2.	Isolate the damaged or suspicious packages. Cordon off the immediate area.
3.	Ensure that all persons who have touched the mailpiece wash their hands with soap and water.
4.	List all persons who have touched the letter and/or envelope. Include contact

	information and have this information available for the authorities. Provide the list to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.
5.	Place all items worn when in contact with the suspected mailpiece in plastic bags and have them available for law enforcement agents.
6.	Shower with soap and water as soon as practical.
7.	Notify the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Emergency Response line at: 770-488-7100 for answers to any questions.
8.	Call a Postal Inspector (see list on the inside back cover of this guide) to report that you've received a letter or parcel in the mail that may contain biological or chemical substances.

Additionally, the mailroom personnel in the Washington, DC metropolitan area and the regional offices should call security and building management personnel. The only exception is the Central Regional Office in Kansas City, which has a mailroom under the control of a non Department of Commerce agency. It also serves a number of agencies located in the building. It has its own hierarchy of officials to call in case of an emergency. The following officials should be called for the each mailroom listed below:

Mailroom Location	Contact
Silver Spring mailroom	Security Officer 301-713-0954 Ext.123 Chief, Building Management Branch 301-713-1950 Ext 112 Emergency Preparedness Officer 301-713-0937 Ext. 133 cell phone – 301-252-7743
World Weather mailroom	Security Officer 301-713-0954 x123 Building Manager, FB4 and World Weather Building 301-457-5010
Eastern Regional Office Norfolk, Virginia	Security Officer 757-441-3431 Building Manager 757-441-6467
Western Regional Office Seattle, Washington	Security Office 206-526-6653 Facility Manager 206-526-6163
Mountain Regional Office Boulder, Colorado	DOC Police 303-497-3530 Security Office 303-497-5918

How should you decontaminate the contaminated articles?

Decontamination can be done by boiling contaminated articles in water for 30 minutes or longer and using some of the common disinfectants. Chlorine is effective in destroying spores and vegetative cells.

Checklist

Suspicious Mail Guidelines	
If you receive a suspicious letter or package:	
1.	Handle with care. Don't shake or bump.
2.	Don't open, smell, touch, or taste.
3.	Isolate it immediately
4.	Treat it as suspect. Call local law enforcement authorities.

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

For a Bomb Evacuate Immediately Call Police Contact Postal Inspectors Call Local Fire Department/HAZMAT Unit	For Radiological Limit Exposure - Don't Handle Distance (Evacuate Area) Shield Yourself From Object Call Police Contact Postal Inspectors Call Local Fire Department/HAZMAT Unit	For Biological or Chemical Isolate - Don't Handle Wash Your Hands With Soap and Warm Water Call Police Contact Postal Inspectors Call Local Fire Department/HAZMAT Unit
---	---	--

Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Web site: www.cdc.gov

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the lead federal agency for protecting the health and safety of people, coordinates public health response to bioterrorism threats. For up-to-date information on health threats from exposure to biological, chemical, or radiological agents, visit CDC's bioterrorism Web page at: www.bt.cdc.gov.

To report an incident, contact CDC's Emergency Preparedness and Response Branch, National Center for Environmental Health at: 770-488-7100.

U.S. Postal Service

Web site: www.usps.com

The U.S. Postal Service Web site features a General Services Administration (GSA) training module with information on how to respond to an anthrax threat in a mailroom, which is available at www.usps.com. The module lays out actions that can be taken if there is a potential anthrax threat in a mailroom, including countermeasures for staff to defend and protect against these threats.

This section of the web site also features clips and a full version of the Postal Service video, *Biological Threat: Protecting Your Mailroom*, which features information on keeping mail centers safe. Business customers can order a free copy of the complete video at www.usps.com or call toll-free at: 800-275-8777.

U.S. Postal Inspection Service

Web site: www.usps.com

The Postal Inspection Service provides information about establishing a secure mail center, detecting mail bombs, and protecting your business against mail fraud schemes or any other postal crimes. Contact your nearest Postal Inspection Service location for details. Inspectors can perform on-site security surveys for larger firms and assist your firm in giving security training presentations.

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Web site: www.fbi.gov

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is the lead federal agency for crisis management for all acts of terrorism and in all threats or incidents of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The FBI's Awareness of National Security Issues and Response (ANSIR) Program is the public voice of the FBI for espionage, counterintelligence, counter terrorism, economic espionage, cyber and physical infrastructure protection, and all national security issues. To report suspected illegal intelligence or terrorism activity against the interest of the United States, telephone the ANSIR coordinator at the FBI Field Office nearest you.

General Services Administration

Web site: www.gsa.gov

The General Services Administration has posted a reference version of the material from its course, "How to Respond to an Anthrax Threat in a Mail Center," on its Web site. Anyone can access the content of this course at no cost.

Occupational Safety & Health Administration

Web site: www.osha.gov

The mission of the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) is to ensure safe and healthful workplaces in America. OSHA provides training and reference materials on safety and health for outreach initiatives to the public. To report incidents of workplace safety violations to OSHA call their toll-free number at: 800-321-6742, and TTY at: 877-889-5627.

MAIL BOMBS AND BOMB THREATS

People often think of a mail bomber as a person motivated by radical political beliefs. This stereotype is incorrect. If you adhere to this stereotype, you may improperly assess and respond to a bomb threat.

Revenge is the motivation that most often triggers a mail bomb or a bomb threat.

Jilted spouses or lovers may seek revenge at the end of their romantic involvement. Former business partners or employees may seek revenge when a business relationship goes sour or when business reversals cause layoffs or firings. Individuals seeking revenge for having been investigated or prosecuted have targeted Law enforcement officers and members of the judiciary for bombs and bomb threats.

Mail bombs usually target specific individuals. Placed bombs, however, are generally intended to disrupt workplaces and injure indiscriminately. Bomb threats may target either individuals or organizations.

Assessment

The chances of your workplace receiving a mail bomb are extremely remote. The chances are greater of receiving a telephoned bomb threat or finding a suspicious and potentially harmful bomb placed at your workplace or on your property.

The vulnerability of you and your workplace depends on a variety of factors - both internal and external. No individual or company is completely immune from attack. The security officer and top management should meet to evaluate the probability of your company or its personnel becoming targets for mail bombs and bomb threats.

The following are typical questions asked during this assessment. The questions can be used to develop information that would help identify company officers or employees who could be targeted or organizations that may attempt a bombing.

Care must be given not to violate an individual employee's privacy. All information should be treated as extremely sensitive. This information should be shared with the mail center security coordinator in the event that a suspicious package is received. The information should not be disseminated to other employees.

Foreign terrorism - Does your company have foreign officers, suppliers, or outlets? If so, in what countries? Are you doing business in countries where there is political unrest and civil strife, or where terrorist organizations operate? Has your company refused to do business with, withdrawn from, or failed to successfully negotiate business contracts with companies, organizations, or governments within the last two years that are affiliated with current terrorists or that represent countries suffering domestic unrest? Does your company manufacture or produce weapons or military support items for the international arms trade that would normally bear markings identifying the organization as the manufacturer? (See Resources section for the Web site of the U.S. Department of State that offers information on terrorist organizations.)

Domestic hate groups - Is your company a high-profile organization whose services, research, or products are the subjects of public controversy? (See Resources section for the Web site of an organization that tracks hate groups.)

Workplace violence - Has your company experienced a recent downsizing, take-over, or reorganization requiring layoffs? Has any employee complained of being physically abused,

harassed, or of being stalked? Has any employee made threats to harm any other employee or the company itself?

Postal Inspectors recommend consultations with security experts in terrorist tactics and vulnerability assessment. The Postal Inspection Service can provide information about establishing a secure mail center and detecting mail bombs. Contact a Postal Inspector near your workplace. In addition, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) provides information about bomb threats and physical security planning on its Web site.

Prevention

The key to prevention is having a bomb threat response plan.

When properly planned and implemented, a bomb threat response plan will help to prevent incidents of mail bombs, bomb threats, and suspiciously placed devices from creating panic among employees and from inflicting physical harm to employees or facilities.

A bomb threat response plan should be part of your company's overall corporate security program that addresses all personnel and physical security issues. Individuals from corporate management and from security should share responsibilities for developing the plan.

Because needs and resources of companies differ, every recommendation below may not apply to all companies. Determine which are appropriate for your company and conduct periodic security reviews of your operation to identify needed improvements.

Most explosive devices are placed, not mailed, therefore, your security plan must include controls over individuals who can physically access and move about your workplace and its immediate surroundings. Having such controls can reduce your company's risk.

Controls to Enhance Physical Security of Your Workplace	
Step	Action
1.	Have security guards greet all visitors and examine personal belongings being brought into the building or office area.
2.	Restrict access to the facility or office through locked or guarded entryways.
3.	Keep storage rooms, boiler rooms, telephone and utility closets, and similar potential hiding places locked or off-limits to visitors.
4.	Use easily distinguishable identification badges for staff and for visitors.
5.	Require visitors to be accompanied by staff employees to and from the office or facility entrance.
6.	Request visitors to display identification to security personnel when they sign in.
7.	Keep detailed logs on the arrival and departure times of all visitors
8.	Consider using the services of a certified protection professional to evaluate in detail your company's personnel and physical security safeguards.

Response

Each bomb threat presents three basic options:

- Evacuate everyone immediately and search.
- Evacuate some employees while a search is undertaken.
- Evacuate no one and search.

A fourth option, to ignore the threat, is not generally considered viable. If the company policy is to evacuate all employees and shut down operations when any threat is received, this policy will likely result in false alarms placed by employees anxious to exploit the policy. It is best to judge the credibility of each threat individually.

Components of a Bomb Threat Response Plan

A Bomb Threat Response Plan should encompass all facilities at your company's site, including outbuildings, parking lots, and garages immediately adjacent to buildings occupied by employees. If your company maintains offices at multiple sites, security officers at each site must be included in the communications loop.

The Bomb Threat Response Plan should, at a minimum, include procedures, provisions, and policies for the following:

- Ensuring that nonpostal deliveries (except commercial shipments) are channeled through the mail center.
- Operating a Command Center.
- Channeling all mail and parcels through a mail bomb-screening program.
- Defining and maintaining communication channels among the mail center security coordinator, management, and security.
- Responding to written bomb threats and phoned in bomb threats.

Command Center - What, Who, Where?

What - While all threats should be taken seriously, your company's response may depend on the circumstances present at any given time. The decision to evacuate all or part of the facility should be made by a Command Center working group. Do not publicize your policy on evacuations.

Who - Representatives from your company's management, security, and mail center should be the core of your Command Center working group. These representatives, specified by name and title, should have the authority to decide how your company will respond to any bomb threat situation.

Where - Locate the Command Center at or near the communications center of your company. Equip the Command Center with telephone numbers for the police, Postal Inspectors, ATF, fire department, and emergency medical services. An employee roster with all current telephone numbers, including home, office, pagers, and cellular telephones should also be maintained. Current copies of your company's floor plans or building blueprints are also critical.

Components of a mail bomb-screening program

Postal Inspectors can help develop a mail bomb-screening program that can be adapted to most company's mail center operations regardless of the size of the company. A successful mail bomb-screening program depends on:

- A well-trained mail center staff.
- Good communication within the firm's management, security, and mail center.
- Cooperation among employees at every level.

Steps to Establish a Mail Bomb-Screening Program	
Step	Action
1.	Perform a vulnerability assessment to determine if your company or a particular employee is a potential target.
2.	Appoint a mail center security coordinator and an alternate to be responsible for the developed plan and to ensure compliance with it.
3.	Establish direct lines of notification and communication among the mail center security coordinator, management, and the security office.
4.	Develop specific screening and inspection procedures for all incoming mail or package deliveries. Train employees in those procedures.
5.	Develop specific mail center handling techniques and procedures for items screened and identified as suspicious and dangerous.
6.	Develop verification procedures for confirming the contents of suspicious packages encountered through the screening process.
7.	Establish procedures for isolating the suspicious package
8.	Conduct training sessions for mail center, security, and management personnel to validate the practicality of all phases of the Mail Bomb Screening Program.
9.	Conduct unannounced tests for mail center personnel.

Role and responsibilities of the mail center security coordinator

Postal Inspectors recommend including the mail center manager, or a designee, as a member of the planning group that develops the Bomb Threat Response Plan. Corporate management should ensure that the mail center security coordinator or an alternate are mature, responsible, and emotionally stable. These individuals should be trained in the Bomb Threat Response Plan.

Mail Center Security Coordinator	
Role	Responsibilities
Oversight and Training	Oversees the mail bomb-screening process and sees that all deliveries are channeled through the mail center. Trains employees in detecting suspicious packages, verifications, safe handling, and communications with security and management in any crisis.
Command	Assumes command of the situation when mail center employees identify a suspicious package during the screening process.
Safety Enforcement	Ensures that personnel who have detected the suspect postal item place sufficient safety distance between themselves and the item and that those employees do not cluster around the

item.

Vitality of direct lines of communication

Having direct lines of communication between the mail center security coordinator, management, and corporate security is vital. The mail center security coordinator must be able to communicate directly with managers in the Command Center.

Corporate security must receive prompt notification when a suspicious package is identified or a threat is received in the mail center. Additional verification may be required of corporate security, or notification may be given to the supporting police, Postal Inspector, and bomb squad disposal units.

These channels of communication will also be crucial when a package clears the screening process, is delivered, and is declared suspicious by the recipient. Information concerning that parcel should be relayed back to the mail center in the event that other similar parcels are being processed.

Telephone threats received by company receptionists, or others, should be brought to the attention of the corporate security officer and then relayed to the mail center manager, who needs to be informed of any specific information that is valuable for the mail bomb-screening process.

Performance of mail screening function

Incoming mail procedures in most companies follow a similar pattern. Bags or bundles of mail and items sent by courier are delivered to a centralized mail center for distribution. If your company does not have a centralized receiving procedure, then management should institute such a procedure immediately.

The initial sorting of the mail for delivery must be done by hand. This is the point where screening of incoming mail for suspect items should occur. Individuals who normally handle the mail sorting function should perform the screening function. As such, these individuals are most likely to notice packages that are out of the ordinary.

Indicators of a suspicious letter or package

The basic screening procedures of incoming mail and packages are not foolproof. In many cases, the person who first detects anything suspicious about a package is the recipient. For this reason, you should distribute a list of suspicious package indicators to all employees to increase their awareness of suspicious packages.

Indicators of a suspicious package are:

- Excessive postage.
- Misspelled words.
- Addressed to title only.
- Rigid or bulky.
- Badly typed or written.

- Fictitious, unfamiliar, or no return address.
- Strange odor.
- Lopsided.
- Oily stains on wrapper.
- Wrong title with name.
- Protruding wires.

Bomb threats received in writing

Written threats provide physical evidence that must be protected from contamination. Written threats and any envelopes in which they are received should be placed under clear plastic or glassine covers. All the circumstances of their receipt should be recorded.

Bomb threats received by telephone

Telephone threats offer an opportunity to obtain more detailed information, perhaps even the caller's identity. For that reason, the telephone receptionist or others who take calls from the public should be trained to remain calm and to solicit as much information as possible. The bomber's intentions may be to damage property, not to injure or kill anyone. If so, the person receiving the call may be able to obtain useful information before the caller ends the conversation.

Response to Bomb Threats Received By Telephone	
Persons	Action
Receptionist	Keep the caller on the line, ask him or her to repeat the message several times, and gather additional information, such as caller ID information. Write down the threat verbatim - in the caller's own words – and record any additional information. Do not hang up on the caller under any circumstances.
Corporate security and management	Decide on the proper response, such as evacuation procedures. Notify the police and fire department immediately.

Sample questions that a trained telephone receptionist should ask during a telephoned bomb threat are:

- When is the bomb going to explode?
- What kind of bomb is it?
- What does it look like? Please describe it?
- Where is it located? Can you give us the office and floor number and building location?
- What will cause it to detonate?
- Many innocent people may be hurt. Why are you doing this?
- What is your name and address?

Description of caller's voice:

Calm	Nasal	Angry
Stutter	Excited	Lisp

Slow	Raspy	Rapid
Deep	Soft	Ragged
Loud	Clearing Throat	Laughter
Deep Breathing	Crying	Cracking Voice
Normal	Disguised	Distinct
Accent	Slurred	Familiar

Background Sounds:

Street Noises	Factory Machinery	Crockery
Animal Noises	Voices	Clear
PA System	Static	Music
Local	House Noises	Booth
Motor	Office Machinery	Other

Threat Language:

Well Spoken (educated)	Incoherent Foul
Message read By threat maker	Taped Irrational

Preparations for conducting a bomb search

Preparations for a Bomb Search	
Evacuate building	If OSHA regulates your company, follow procedures given in your company's emergency evacuation and fire prevention plan as required by OSHA. Furnish evacuation routes to all supervisors. Fire alarms should not be used to signal an emergency bomb response evacuation. The possibility exists that a bomber would target routes, such as stairwells and/or emergency exits, normally used during an evacuation due to a fire alarm.
Contact police and fire departments	Your local police and fire department should be contacted about their bomb search policies. Determine if in the event of a threat, if these departments will help conduct the search. If yes, find out what they will need from your Command Center. Police agencies often will not conduct searches of private facilities. If your local police and fire department will not assist in the search for an explosive device, company search teams will have to be deployed. You and your employees know

	your facility and are more likely to observe unusual items that police and fire department personnel could overlook.
Deploy bomb search team	Searches may be conducted by individuals from your company who have volunteered for bomb search deployment duty and who have been trained for this purpose. A bomb search team may consist of managers only or teams of managers and employees. For best results, the individuals conducting the search should be very familiar with all the sights, sounds, and smells of the area to be searched. The ideal search team usually consists of two volunteer employees and a supervisor. The employees conduct the search under the direction of the supervisor, who communicates the progress of the search to the Command Center. Private security professionals should train volunteers in basic search and building clearance techniques.
Outfit search teams	Search teams should be outfitted beforehand with a few elementary tools, such as screwdrivers, crescent wrenches, pry bars, and flashlights. Remember to have the necessary keys or a custodian available to open storage rooms, boiler rooms, telephone, and utility closets.

Conducting a bomb search

Search techniques should be kept confidential and training should be limited to security employees.

Conducting a Building Search	
Who	A team of two employees.
Where	Start with the building's exterior.
How	The team should search the areas of the facility most accessible to the public. Then move indoors through the main entrance or lobby to waiting rooms, rest rooms, stairwells, and elevators. Each of the two employees begins his or her search at the same point in the room. Begin at floor level. Divide the room into four-foot increments from the floor to the ceiling, including the area above a false/suspended ceiling. Each employee works his or her way up in four-foot increments. Each person works in opposite directions around the room and back to the center of the room. The search patterns should overlap somewhat. This process is repeated methodically from office to office and from floor to floor throughout the entire facility.

What If	If a suspicious parcel or device item is found, evacuate and cordon off the immediate area to prevent inadvertent exposure to the danger. Vibration from movement near the suspect item may cause an explosion. Additionally, a timing mechanism may be set to activate the device within minutes of placement. Do not touch the suspicious device. Touching it may trigger a detonation. Under no circumstances should volunteers attempt to handle or remove suspicious placed devices. Report the situation to your security office who will call the police. Once the area is cleared, continue throughout the facility until the entire area is declared safe for re-entry. This precaution is necessary because a bomber may plant more than one device.
---------	--

Employees role if they receive an unexpected package

Because of the increased sophistication of mail and placed bombs, examining the exterior of the package can readily identify fewer of the devices. Remind employees: If you're not expecting a package, be suspicious.

If you receive an unexpected package:

- First, check the return address.
- If you do not recognize the return address, contact the security office.
- The security office should attempt to contact the sender.
- Do not open the package until you are fully satisfied that it is harmless.

Mail center coordinators responsibility after encountering a suspicious package during screening

Step	Response	Action
1.	Inquire	Ask the employee who found the suspicious package to write down the specific recognition point(s) in the screening process that caused the alert (excessive postage, no return address, rigid envelope, lopsided, strange odor).
2.	Alert	Alert the remaining employees that a suspicious package has been found and what the points of recognition are and to remain clear of the isolation area.
3.	Remove	Place suspect item in reinforced container and take it to the isolation area.
4.	Document	Record from each side of the item all available information (name and address of addressee and of sender, postmark, cancellation date, types of stamps, and any other markings or labels found on the item). Copy information in exact spelling and location given on item.
5.	Notify	Contact management and security and inform them a suspicious item has been detected through the screening process.
6.	Inform	Inform the police and Postal Inspectors (if a mailed item) giving all information recorded from the suspect item.

Role of management or security staff after they are told of a suspicious package by the mail center coordinator

Step	Response	Action
1.	Document	Record accurately all information pertaining to the suspicious package in an incident log. If possible, dispatch a security officer with a Polaroid camera to photograph all sides of the package without moving it, as it rests in the holding container. The bomb scene officer will make these exact details of the package's markings available for study and use.
2.	Contact and verify	Before calling the police, security personnel should attempt to find out if the addressee of the suspicious package has any knowledge of the item or its contents. If the addressee can positively identify the suspect item, the package may be opened by security with relative safety. Attempt to resolve the verification by contacting the sender as indicated on the suspicious package's return address. If the sender must be contacted to identify the item and contents, a management decision must be made as to the reliability of the information.
3.	Notify	If the return addressee proves to be fictitious, or if you cannot locate the sender within a reasonable period of time, notify the police and Postal Inspectors. Tell them that a suspicious package has been detected by the mail screening process and has been placed in the holding container in the isolation area awaiting their arrival. Be sure to give responding authorities the specific location of the holding area and the mail center coordinator's or security officer's name. Notify appropriate management personnel of the detection, through mail screening, of a suspicious package.
4.	Assist	Stand by to offer assistance to the police and Postal Inspectors upon their arrival.

Sample questions to ask the addressee or sender during the verification process:

- Is the addressee familiar with the name and address of the sender?
- Is the addressee expecting a package from the sender? If so, what is the approximate size of the item?
- Ask the sender to fully explain the circumstances surrounding the sending of the parcel and to describe the contents. At this point, management and security must make a decision whether to proceed to open the parcel or not.
- If the sender is unknown, is the addressee expecting any business correspondence from the city, state, or country of origin of the package?
- Is the addressee aware of any friends, relatives, or business acquaintances currently on vacation or on business trips in the area of origin?

If the verification process determines that the sender is unknown at the return address or that the return address is fictitious, consider this scenario as an indication that the parcel may be dangerous.

Importance of testing of contingency plans

The Postal Inspection Service cannot overemphasize the need to test contingency plans with mock suspicious parcels placed in the mail center or elsewhere in the facility. These tests should be conducted in a manner that does not alarm employees. The dress rehearsals help ensure that your lines of communication function as planned and that each person who has a role to play knows his or her part.

Test the efficiency your emergency contingency plan by conducting scheduled tests. Hold post-testing meetings to address problems and resolve them before the next test. Use the following Bomb Threat Response Plan checklist to periodically review your company's preparations.

Checklist

Bomb Threat Response Plan Checklist

- The Bomb Threat Response Plan complements overall physical security plan. Ensure that your company's premises are secured against unauthorized entry
- Command Center staff include corporate management, security, and the mail center security coordinator. First step is to perform a vulnerability assessment.
- Command Center staff has authority to deal with any threat received and to order an evacuation.
- Equip Command Center with telephone numbers of police, fire department, Postal Inspection Service, medical emergency services, and all employees. Have facility floor plans or blueprints on file.
- Determine local police policy on conducting bomb threat searches.
- If needed, organize and train search teams of volunteer employees familiar with areas to be searched.
- Equip search teams with basic tools, such as flashlights, screwdrivers, pry bars, and keys to all offices and storage areas.
- Train telephone operators and receptionists to remain calm if receiving a threat and to gather additional information.
-
- Establish policy requiring all mailed and privately delivered parcels to undergo screening in the mail center.
- Train mail center employees to recognize suspicious parcel and mail bomb characteristics during screening.
- Advise employees to not open suspicious parcels.
- Advise all employees to contact mail center if they receive a parcel they are not expecting and which cannot be explained.

Resources

Southern Poverty Law Center

Web site: www.splcenter.org

The Southern Poverty Law Center provides a list of active hate groups based on information gathered from hate groups' publications, citizens' reports, law enforcement agencies, field sources, and news reports.

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms

Web site: www.atf.treas.gov

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) is a law enforcement organization within the U.S. Department of the Treasury responsible for enforcing the federal laws and regulations relating to alcohol, tobacco, firearms, explosives, and arms. ATF's Web site provides information on bomb threats and physical security planning.

U.S. Department of State

Web site: www.state.gov

The U.S. Department of State's Web site provides a current list of terrorist organizations.

Mail Center Theft

Security is vital to mail center operations - large and small. Lack of security can result in theft of supplies, postage, mail, and valuable information about your company contained in sensitive mail. To make

When developing your mail center policies and procedures, the key word is prevention.

To ensure your mail center's security and to reduce risks and losses, your company should have policies and procedures for the following:

- Personnel security.
- Access control.
- Registered Mail™ and high-value shipments.
- Company funds.
- Postage meters.

Definition

What is mail? Or, when does federal protection and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service jurisdiction extend into your mail center?

Letters or parcels are personal property. They are not considered mail protected by federal statutes until they are placed in an authorized depository for mail matter.

Authorized depositories include:

- Any Post Office.

- Collection box.
- Letter box.
- Other receptacle intended or used for the receipt or delivery of mail on any mail route.
- Mail handed to a carrier serving a route.

Items that are intended for mailing, but that are stolen by an agent or messenger of the sender prior to deposit in an authorized depository are not protected under federal statute.

Termination of federally protected mail

Mail received into the hands of the addressee or the addressee's agent is considered properly delivered mail. Mail addressed to employees or officials of an organization at the organization's address is considered properly delivered after it has been received at the organization. For this reason, the Postal Inspection Service discourages individuals from using their employer's address for receipt of personal mail.

Mail delivered into a privately owned receptacle, designated by postal regulations as a depository for receipt or delivery of mail, is protected as long as the mail item remains in the box. Mail adjacent to such a box is also protected.

Protection ends when the addressee or the addressee's agent removes the items. Mail addressed to a Post Office box is considered delivered once it is properly removed from the box.

To learn about the federal laws applicable to postal crimes, see the Resources section on page 41 for a web site for the United States Code.

Representative Federal Laws on Selected Postal Crimes
18 USC 501, Counterfeiting Stamps, Meter Stamps, or Postal Cards
18 USC 876, Mailing Threats and Extortion Letters
18 USC 1341, Mail Fraud
18 USC 1342, Using Fictitious Name or Address in Mail Fraud Scheme
18 USC 1461, Mailing Obscene or Crime-Inciting Matter
18 USC 1463, Mailing Indecent Matter on Wrappers or Envelopes
18 USC 1707, Theft of Postal Service Property
18 USC 1708, Theft of Mail or Possession of Stolen Mail (by nonpostal person)
18 USC 1715, Firearms Nonmailable, in Certain Cases
18 USC 1716, Bombs and Other Injurious Articles Nonmailable
18 USC 1720, Reuse of Canceled Stamps or Envelopes
18 USC 1725, Postage Unpaid on Mail Put in Mailbox
21 USC 843b, Unlawful Mailing of a Controlled Substance

PERSONNEL

When evaluating the security policies and procedures in a mail center, focus on the three "Ps" of mail center security -

Procedures

Do you give the same personnel screening to your mail center employees as you do to others in your company?

Review the personnel screening requirements for your mail center personnel. Remember, these mail center workers have access to almost everything that comes into or goes out of your company.

How extensive is your pre-employment screening?

When conducting pre-employment screening, you should check a job candidate's criminal records, have the candidate undergo a drug-screening test, perform a credit inquiry on the candidate, and verify the candidate's former employment. In addition, by interviewing a job candidate in-depth and at length, you may identify any potential derogatory information.

What may prompt an employee to steal?

An employee's personal situation can change quickly. An honest, trusted employee can become a thief - because of need. Alcohol, drugs, gambling, and marital or health problems can cause an employee to become dishonest. If you are a supervisor of a mail center, you should remain alert for personality changes that might signal such a problem. Take precautions to protect your company from theft. Reducing an employee's opportunity to steal is an essential prevention technique.

Who should accept and drop off the mail and other valuables?

Only authorized employees should be assigned to accept mail at the office. Give the Post Office a list of these employees for its file. When any personnel change, update the mail personnel list immediately and provide a copy to the Post Office to avoid having mail given to unauthorized persons. It is crucial to keep the list current especially when you process accountable mail, such as registered and certified letters.

If your company sends out or receives valuables, vary the time of day and direction of travel between your office and the Post Office. Check periodically to determine if your mail messengers are making unauthorized stops or are leaving your mail unattended in unlocked delivery vehicles.

Theft Vulnerability of Mail Center Physical Layout

A properly designed physical layout of a mail center can serve as a preventive measure.

Measures to Enhance the Physical Layout of Your Mail Center for Detering Theft	
Step	Action
1.	Make all work areas visible to supervisors.
2.	Use one-way glass, closed-circuit video surveillance cameras, or elevated supervisor stations.

3.	Eliminate desk drawers and similar places of concealment.
4.	Supervise employees. Often, dishonest mail center employees have stolen thousands of dollars worth of merchandise, remittances, and company credit cards simply because they were not adequately supervised.
5.	Control access to your mail center and mail handling areas. Use of sign in/out sheets, card key access control systems, and photo identification badges are all effective security procedures. Extend this control to all employees including cleaning and maintenance personnel.
6.	Enforce limited access to mail center - only authorized employees should be allowed in the working areas of the mail center.
7.	Use a counter or a desk to separate the area where employees pick up mail from the rest of the mail center.

Procedures

In reviewing the mail center internal controls, what questions should you ask?

- Is my outgoing mail sealed shortly after the most valuable item is placed inside?
- Can the contents and value of the mail item be identified from the exterior appearance?
- Is address correction requested routinely so my mailing lists can be updated? Is postage paid for this service accounted for periodically?

Theft Prevention Tips

Mail Center Activity and Equipment	Action
Registered Mail	Keep Registered Mail separate from other mail. Document each transfer of Registered Mail by requiring the receiving employee to sign for it. This procedure will establish accountability. Companies find they have difficulty tracking certified and Registered Mail if they do not set up a log to record the date a piece of mail is received, the type of mail, and the Postal Service's control number. Have the person receiving the piece of mail sign and date the entry log. This step provides a reliable tracking system.
Petty Cash	Establish adequate controls to identify individual responsibility for losses that may occur. Never keep postage stamps in unlocked drawers.
Postage Meter Security	Restrict access to postage meters to authorized personnel. Do not allow employees to run personal mail through postage meters because this practice is often theft. You can get an accurate account of postage and its purpose when only authorized employees operate the postage meters. Keep your

	postage meter locked when not in use. Have a trusted employee maintain Form 3602-A, Record of Meter Register Readings (see sample of form on page 36. This procedure detects unauthorized after-hours use of the meter and also aids you in obtaining a refund if your postage meter malfunctions.
Advance Deposits	Avoid paying for business reply, postage due, or other postal costs from petty cash. Using a petty cash drawer can provide a theft opportunity for a dishonest mail center employee. Establish an advance deposit account with the local Post Office. Companies that prefer using petty cash can protect themselves against theft by requiring receipts from the Post Office for postage paid and by checking mail to ensure that it balances with receipts.
Use of Authorized Depositories	Do not leave your tray or sack of mail on a curb next to a full collection box. If this is a problem for your company, contact your postmaster to resolve. This could prevent your mail from being lost or stolen.
Outgoing Mail	Conduct periodic checks of outgoing mail against customer order lists. This step can detect dishonest employees who are putting their name and address on orders being shipped out to legitimate customers. This is a very difficult crime to detect without someone reviewing outgoing mail. Also, while checking outgoing mail, you can see if your employees are using metered postage for personal mail.
Outside Mail Preparation Services	Contract with a commercial mail preparation service to compile, stuff, and presort your mailings. On occasion, Postal Inspectors have found that some preparation service operators have either pocketed fees without entering the material into the mail or have grossly overcharged advertisers for postage on the mailings. Your local Post Office's Bulk Business Mail Entry Unit uses the Form 3600 series to maintain an independent record of bulk mailings. Any questions related to the quantity, costs, and date of a particular mailing can be verified by contacting this unit.
Incoming Mail	Clearly label depositories used to receive incoming mail and those designated for outgoing mail. Label 33, Warning (Penalty for Damage to Mailboxes and Theft), available from your local Post Office or the Postal Inspection Service (see sample on next page), can be used to highlight the fact that material in such receptacles is protected by federal law.
Missent Mail	Implement a system to handle misdelivered or

	missent mail.
--	---------------

Response

Always call your Post Office to report mail losses. The Postal Inspection Service charts losses. This process identifies problem areas and assists Postal Inspectors in identifying thieves.

Security recommendations developed by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service are given in the Mail Center Security Checklist on page 37. Use the checklist to evaluate security in your mail center operations.

Mail Center Security Checklist

- Mail center personnel screened.
- Authorized receptacles for U.S. Mail clearly labeled.
- Location, furniture, and mail flow provide maximum security.
- Alarm Access limited to authorized personnel.s and surveillance equipment installed.
- Distribution delays eliminated.
- Postage and meter protected from theft or unauthorized use.
- High-value items locked overnight.
Accountable items verified and secured.
- Control of address labels maintained.
- Labels securely fastened to mail items.
- Postage meter strips overlap labels.
- Labels and cartons do not identify valuable contents.
- Return address included and duplicate label in carton.
- Presort and ZIP+4® savings taken when applicable.
- Parcels prepared to withstand transit.
- Containers and sacks used when possible.
- Outgoing mail delivered to postal custody inside the facility.
- Employee parking separated from dock area.
- Lost and rifled mail reported to Postal Service.
- Supervisor can see all employees and work areas.
- Contract delivery services screened.
- Unnecessary stops by delivery vehicle are eliminated.
- Procedures established for handling unexplained or suspicious packages.
- Periodic testing done for loss and or quality control.
- Postal Service receipts for meter settings verify authorized amounts.
- Meters checked regularly.

Resources

U.S. Postal Inspection Service

Web site: www.usps.com

The Postal Inspection Service can provide more information about establishing a secure mail center and protecting your business against mail theft. Contact the Postal Inspection Service Division nearest you for details. Inspectors can perform on-site security surveys for larger firms and assist your firm in giving security training presentations.

General Services Administration

Web site: www.legal.gsa.gov

FedLaw, a page on the Web site of the General Services Administration, has references and links to federal regulations and the United States Code. To order a printed copy of this Mail Center Security Guide, call the Material Distribution Center at: 1-800-332-0317, press option 4, and ask for Publication 166. Additional resources related to security of the mail and an online version of this guide is available on www.usps.com.

Publication 166
September 2002

Divisions of the Postal Inspection Service

For the telephone number of your local Postal Inspector, contact the nearest Postal Inspection Service division from the list below.

Florida Division 3400 Lakeside Dr 6th Fl Miramar FL 33027-3242 (954) 436-7200 Fax: (954) 436-7282	North Jersey/Caribbean Division PO Box 509 Newark NJ 07101-0509 (973) 693-5400 Fax: (973) 645-0600	Rocky Mountain Division 1745 Stout St Ste 900 Denver CO 80202-3034 (303) 313-5320 Fax: (303) 313-5351
Gulf Coast Division PO Box 1276 Houston TX 77251-1276 (713) 238-4400 Fax: (713) 238-4460	Northeast Division 495 Summer St Ste 600 Boston MA 02210-2114 (617) 556-4400 Fax: (617) 556-0400	Southeast Division PO Box 16489 Atlanta GA 30321-0489 (404) 608-4500 Fax: (404) 608-4505
Michigan Division PO Box 330119 Detroit MI 48232-6119 (313) 226-8184 Fax: (313) 226-8220	Northern California Division PO Box 882528 San Francisco CA 94188-2528 (415) 778-5800 (415) 778-5822	Southern California Division PO Box 2000 Pasadena CA 91102-2000 (626) 405-1200 Fax: (626) 405-1207
Mid-Atlantic Division PO Box 3000 Charlotte NC 28228-3000 (704) 329-9120 Fax: (704) 357-0039	Northern Illinois Division 433 W Harrison St Rm 50190 Chicago IL 60669-2201 (312) 983-7900 Fax: (312) 983-6300	Southwest Division PO Box 162929 Ft. Worth TX 76161-2929 (817) 317-3400 Fax: (817) 317-3430
Midwest Division 1106 Walnut St	Northwest Division PO Box 400	Washington Metro Division

<p>St Louis MO 63199-2201 (314) 539-9300 Fax: (314) 539-9306</p>	<p>Seattle WA 98111-4000 (206) 442-6300 Fax: (206) 442-6304</p>	<p>PO Box 96096 Washington DC 20066-6096 (202) 636-2300 or (301) 499-7585 Fax: (202) 636-2287</p>
<p>New York Metro Division PO Box 555 New York NY 10116-0555 (212) 330-3844 Fax: (212) 330-2720</p>	<p>Philadelphia Metro Division PO Box 7500 Philadelphia PA 19101-9000 (215) 895-8450 Fax: (215) 895-8470</p>	<p>Western Allegheny Division 1001 California Ave Rm 2101 Pittsburgh PA 15290-9000 (412) 359-7900 Fax: (412) 359-7682</p>

Mail Center Security Guide, Publication 166, September 2002

EXHIBIT 1

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL FORMAT

<p>U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Washington, DC 20230</p>		<p>NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES</p>
<p>OFFICIAL BUSINESS PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300</p>		
<p>BUSINESS REPLY MAIL FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO. 1100 ROCKVILLE, MD</p>		
<p>POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY NOAA</p>		
<p>US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS ROOM 6013 14TH AND CONSTITUTION AVE NW WASHINGTON DC 20230</p>		

EXHIBIT 2**ZIP CODE STATE ABBREVIATIONS**

Alabama	- AL	Nebraska	- NE
Alaska	- AK	Nevada	- NV
Arizona	- AZ	New Hampshire	- NH
California	- CA	New Jersey	- NJ
Colorado	- CO	New Mexico	- NM
Connecticut	- CT	New York	- NY
Delaware	- DE	North Carolina	- NC
District of Columbia	- DC	North Dakota	- ND
Florida	- FL	Ohio	- OH
Georgia	- GA	Oklahoma	- OK
Hawaii	- HI	Oregon	- OR
Idaho	- ID	Pennsylvania	- PA
Illinois	- IL	Rhode Island	- RI
Indiana	- IN	South Carolina	- SC
Iowa	- IA	South Dakota	- SD
Kansas	- KS	Tennessee	- TN
Kentucky	- KY	Texas	- TX
Louisiana	- LA	Utah	- UT
Maine	- ME	Vermont	- VT
Maryland	- MD	Virginia	- VA
Massachusetts	- MA	Washington	- WA
Michigan	- MI	West Virginia	- WV
Minnesota	- MN	Wisconsin	- WI
Mississippi	- MS	Wyoming	- WY
Missouri	- MO		