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Office of the President
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SUBJECT: Guidelines for Handling Anthrax or Other Biological Threats During High Threat Conditions

Purpose. These Guidelines provide implementing regulations on the handling of Anthrax or other biological agent threats received through the USUHS Mail Service Center, Administrative Support Division (ASD), the Logistics Division (LOG), and all other USUHS activities.

Applicability. These Guidelines apply to all personnel assigned to the USUHS Mail Service Center, the Logistics Division, and all other USUHS personnel, as appropriate, during high threat conditions as determined by the USUHS President.

Policy. It is the USUHS policy that:

1. Personnel from the Mail Service Center, the Logistics Division, and other personnel as appropriate, are provided with the best and most current guidance on the handling of Anthrax or other biological agent threats.

2. All personnel, including those in the Mail Service Center, the Logistics Division, and others, as appropriate, who handle bulk mail or deliveries received from off campus will utilize disposable examination gloves and a long-sleeved laboratory coat.

3. At the employee's discretion, all personnel who open bulk mail in the Mail Service Center, including the Logistics Division, can wear powered air-purifying respirators (PAPRs) with P100 filters, or full-face negative pressure air purifying respirators (APRs) with N95 filters, in addition to gloves and a long-sleeved laboratory coat except at times when the President, USUHS, determines that such protection should be mandatory.

a. All personnel who will use the full-face negative pressure air purifying respirators (APRs) with N95 filters will enroll in the USU Respiratory Protection Program by contracting the Environmental Health and Occupational Safety (EHS) at 301-295-9443.

b. Mail will be opened with a manual letter opener.

c. Opening of mail in a Biosafety cabinet (BSC) that has "passed" certification within 12 months may be used in lieu of a respirator or PAPR. This is preferable to individual personal protective measures since it protects the room environment as well as the individual opening the mail. Gloves and long laboratory coat use are still required.

4. University personnel who are not comfortable with opening any particular letter or package may notify their supervisor who in turn will notify the USUHS Security Division at

(301) 295-3033.

Definition. Some characteristics of suspicious letters or packages may include the following:

1. Excessive postage.
2. Handwritten or poorly typed address.
3. Title, but no name.
4. No return address or one that cannot be verified as legitimate.
5. Misspelled names or incorrect titles.
6. Misspelling of common words.
7. Marked with restrictive endorsements, such as "personal" or "confidential."
8. Strange odors or stains.
9. Lopsided or oddly shaped.
10. Protruding wires or aluminum foil or excessive weight.
11. Excessive security material such as masking tape, string, etc.
12. Visual distractions.
13. Shows a city or state in the postmark that does not match the return address.
14. Unexpected, or from someone unfamiliar.
15. Addressed to someone no longer with your organization or otherwise outdated.

Procedures. There are two levels of escalating procedures, depending on the threat associated with a particular item:

Level 1-All Bulk Mail and Bulk Deliveries Received from Off-Campus Sources.

1. Handle the material disturbing the contents as little as possible.
2. Utilize Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required by paragraph 3 of the Policy section of this document (examination gloves for handling plus respiratory protection and long-sleeved laboratory coat for opening).
3. Wash hands thoroughly after handling the mail.

4. Do not eat, drink or smoke while transporting and/or handling bulk deliveries.

Level 2-Suspicious Item or Foreign Substance Spill.

1. Follow all procedures for Level 1. When handling the material, disturb the contents as little as possible. Proceed calmly. Never open, shake or empty the contents of any suspicious envelope or package. If powder or other foreign substance is detected, leave the substance in place and do not attempt to clean it up.

2. Immediately and GENTLY place the envelope or package on the table or counter of the work area.

3. Remove your gloves and place them next to the package (if you cannot remove the gloves as instructed by EHS, leave them on and call for a supervisor, see 5.a. through 5.c).

4. If the item is in a biosafety cabinet, leave it undisturbed. Otherwise, cover the letter (or package) and gloves with the blue chux (towel-like covering material) located near your workstation. If chux are not available, cover the articles with a mail tub or a trash can, etc.

5. Inform co-workers. Ask for a fellow worker to accompany you, leave the room and WALK to the nearest washroom without touching yourself, doorknobs, etc.

- a. Co-workers will immediately exit the room and ensure that no one else enters the area.

- b. Co-workers will notify the USUHS Security Office at (301) 295-3033.

- c. Security will alert USUHS Facilities Division to shut off the air ventilation, as appropriate.

- d. USUHS Security will notify WRNMMC Security, CCRC Duty Officer at extension (301) 295-6699 or the 24-hour pager (888) 620-2443, and other agencies as appropriate. Security will then notify the following University officials: President, Senior Vice President, Vice President for Finance and Administration, Chief of Staff, the Deans of the School of Medicine and the Graduate School of Nursing, the Director, EHS, and the University's External Affairs.

6. Turn on the water supply with a paper towel or have the individual who accompanies you do so for you.

- a. Wash your hands with soap and water.

- b. Use a paper towel to turn off the water supply or have the individual who accompanies you do so for you.

- c. Return to your office area and ensure that a co-worker has notified USUHS

Security; do so if not already done.

7. Assist the USUHS Security staff in preparing a listing of all individuals who were in the room with you when the suspicious package was identified.

8. Security will secure the area.

Responsibilities.

1. The Responsibility Center Managers are responsible for:

a. Ensuring that all personnel assigned to their responsibility center have read and understand the instructions provided above.

b. Ensuring that the procedures are followed and proper authorities are notified.

2. The Director of the Security Division is responsible for:

a. Ensuring that the appropriate procedures and external notification calls have been made as listed above.

b. Notifying USUHS officials as listed above.

3. The Director of the Facilities Division is responsible for:

a. Ensuring that the appropriate ventilation systems have been shut down, as appropriate.

4. The Director of Environmental Health and Occupational Safety is responsible for:

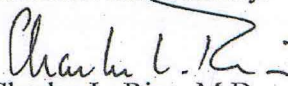
a. Establishing a respiratory protection program to ensure appropriate medical screening and fit testing of personnel required to wear respiratory protection.

b. Ensuring that any biosafety cabinet used is installed and used in accordance with applicable regulations, standards and instructions.

c. Ensuring that all actions taken are minimizing the spread of possible contamination and directed toward ensuring the safety of all involved personnel.

d. Notifying the USUHS Biological Safety Officer.

Effective Date. These Guidelines are effective immediately.


Charles L. Rice, M.D.
President