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The following is offered for informational and instructional purposes. This document was originally issued after September 11<sup>th</sup>. It has been updated with current information and contains other resources that will answer most questions.

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## **HOW TO HANDLE ANTHRAX AND OTHER BIOLOGICAL AGENT THREATS**

The University of South Florida Police Department has developed a strong, systematic approach to assist University Community members if anyone receives a suspicious package or letter. Many facilities in communities around the country have received anthrax threat letters. Most were empty envelopes; some have contained powdery substances. Even though many of these threats have been unfounded, our top priority is to provide a safe learning environment, so we take them seriously. These guidelines provide procedures for handling such incidents.

### **REMAIN CALM**

1. Anthrax organisms can cause infection in the skin, gastrointestinal system, or the lungs. To do, so the organism must be rubbed into abraded skin, swallowed, or inhaled as a fine, aerosolized mist. Disease can be prevented after exposure to the anthrax spores by early treatment with the appropriate antibiotics. Anthrax is not spread from one person to another person.
2. For anthrax to be effective as a covert agent, it must be aerosolized into very small particles. This is difficult to do, and requires a great deal of technical skill and special equipment. If these small particles are inhaled, life-threatening lung infection can occur, but prompt recognition and treatment are effective.

### **SUSPICIOUS UNOPENED LETTER OR PACKAGE MARKED WITH THREATENING MESSAGE SUCH AS "ANTHRAX"**

1. Do not shake or empty the contents of any suspicious envelope or package.
2. PLACE the envelope or package in a plastic bag or some other type of container to prevent leakage of contents.
3. If you do not have any container, then COVER the envelope or package with anything (e.g., clothing, paper, trash can, etc.) and do not remove this cover.
4. Then LEAVE the room and CLOSE the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering (i.e., keep others away).
5. WASH your hands with

## **ENVELOPE WITH POWDER AND POWDER SPILLS OUT ONTO SURFACE**

1. **DO NOT try to CLEAN UP the powder.** COVER the spilled contents immediately with anything (e.g., clothing, paper, trash can, etc.) and do not remove this cover!
2. Then LEAVE the room and CLOSE the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering (i.e., keep others away).
3. WASH your hands with **soap and water** to prevent spreading any powder to your face.
4. What to do next...
  - If you are at **HOME**, then report the incident to local police.
  - If you are at **WORK**, then report the incident to the **University Police** by dialing **“911”**, **and** notify your building supervisor or an available supervisor.
5. Isolate all persons exposed to the contents in another area nearby. ***Do not leave the area until advised to do so by local law enforcement and/or emergency medical personnel.***
6. REMOVE heavily contaminated clothing as soon as possible and place in a plastic bag, or some other container that can be sealed. This clothing bag should be given to the emergency responders for proper handling.
7. SHOWER with **soap and water** as soon as possible. *Do Not Use Bleach Or Other Disinfectant On Your Skin.*
8. If possible, list all people who were in the room or area, especially those who had actual contact with the powder. Give this list to both the local public health authorities so that proper instructions can be given for medical follow-up, and to law enforcement officials for further investigation.

## **QUESTION OF ROOM CONTAMINATION BY AEROSOLIZATION**

**For example: small device triggered, warning that air-handling system is contaminated, or warning that a biological agent released in a public space.**

1. Turn off local fans or ventilation units in the area.
2. LEAVE area immediately.
3. CLOSE the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering (i.e., keep others away).
4. What to do next...
  - If you are at **HOME**, then **dial “911”** to report the incident to local police and the local FBI field office.
  - If you are at **WORK**, then **dial “911”** to report the incident to the **University Police**, **and** notify your building supervisor or an available supervisor.
5. Isolate all persons exposed to the contents in another area nearby. ***Do not leave the area until advised to do so by local law enforcement and/or emergency medical personnel.***
6. If possible, list all people who were in the room or area. Give this list to both the local public health authorities so that proper instructions can be given for medical follow-up, and to law enforcement officials for further investigation.





- Prepare a disaster supplies kit to sustain your family for three to seven days that includes a supply of water, food, flashlight and batteries, a battery-powered radio, first-aid kit and medicines, a change of clothing, an extra set of keys, duct tape and plastic sheeting and important documents.
- Be prepared to do without service you normally depend on that could be disrupted – electricity, telephone, natural gas, gasoline pumps and Internet transactions.
- In the immediate area