

## Three Rivers Community College

### EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

#### 16. SUSPICIOUS LETTER OR PARCEL

The U.S. Postal Inspection Service Dangerous Mail and Homeland Security are responsible for detecting and preventing prohibited mailings, mail bombs and dangerous mail to include hazardous material and weapons of mass destruction. The Norwich Police Department does not have a bomb squad; therefore the law enforcement agency with primary responsibility for any incident where resolution and / rendering safe a suspicious letter, package or device is the Emergency Services Unit of the Connecticut State Police. Additionally, the Federal Bureau of Investigation has concurrent jurisdiction with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service on mail bombs; and, primary jurisdiction on bombing incidents involving terrorism. Therefore, in addition to 911 notification of suspicious letters or parcels, each of the aforementioned agencies should be notified of any suspicious letter or parcel received at the College.

Familiarity with the characteristics of suspect parcels can help to avert a tragedy. Although the appearance of mail bombs may vary greatly, some characteristics that have repeatedly shown up are identified below:

- Mail bombs may have excessive postage. Normally a bomber does not want to mail a parcel over the counter and have to deal face-to-face with a window clerk.
- The return address may be fictitious or non-existent.
- The postmark may show a different location than the return address.
- Mail bombs may bear restricted endorsements, such as "Personal" or "Private." This is particularly important when the addressee does not usually receive personal mail at the office.
- Mail bombs may display distorted handwriting, or the name and address may be prepared with homemade labels or cut-and-paste lettering.
- Parcel bombs may be unprofessionally wrapped with several combinations of tape used to secure the package, and may be endorsed "Fragile--Handle With Care" or "Rush--Do Not Delay."
- Letter bombs may feel rigid, or appear uneven or lopsided.
- Package bombs may have an irregular shape, soft spots or bulges.
- Mail bombs may have protruding wires, aluminum foil, or oil stains, and may emit a peculiar odor.

Additional guidance on what constitutes a suspicious letter or parcel provided by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service includes the following typical characteristics which ought to trigger suspicion include letters or parcels that:

- Have any powdery substance on the outside.
- Are unexpected or from someone unfamiliar to you.
- Have excessive postage, handwritten or poorly typed address, incorrect titles or titles with no name, or misspellings of common words.
- Are addressed to someone no longer with your organization or are otherwise outdated.
- Have no return address, or have one that can't be verified as legitimate.
- Are of unusual weight, given their size, or are lopsided or oddly shaped.

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- Have an unusual amount of tape.
- Are marked with restrictive endorsements, such as "Personal" or "Confidential."
- Have strange odors or stains.

The United States Postal Inspection Service provided a poster, which has been reproduced in Appendix E, depicting examples of suspicious letters and parcels.

Postal Inspectors as well as the other agencies identified in paragraph one above, are able to respond quickly if a suspect article is discovered. Each Inspection Service field division has trained and equipped bomb specialists available to provide professional assistance. If you become suspicious of a mailing and are unable to verify the contents, observe the following safety precautions:

- Don't open the article.
- Isolate the suspect parcel and evacuate the immediate area.
- Don't put it in water or a confined space, such as a desk drawer or cabinet.
- If possible, open windows in the immediate area to assist in venting potentially explosive gases.
- Don't worry about possible embarrassment if the item turns out to be innocent. Instead, contact the Postal Inspection Service and your local police department.

Emergency notification contact information and procedures:

It is essential that in reporting the incident to authorities that they are provided with a direct number for return calls to the complainant. You should never provide the main College number to the law enforcement agencies identified below. It is recommended that the direct outside line to the Security Desk (860-215-9053) be provided to law enforcement agencies as a call back number. Complete details and contact information concerning all incidents must be reported to Security on the College Emergency Number as soon as possible. The Security Desk direct outside line, interior extension Emergency Number (55555) and Assistance Number (22222) will be continuously staffed and monitored. In the event of evacuation of the main building all of the above VOIP phone lines will be relocated to the primary Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in the Central Utility Plant (CUP) maintaining all continuity and functionality. In the event that the CUP is the target of the threat, the alternate EOC will be located in the Dean of Administration's Conference Room.

The following numbers and contact procedures are provided for your assistance:

- Three Rivers Community College direct outside line to the Security Desk (860) 215-9053.
- Three Rivers Community College Emergency Hotline Number: 55555
- Norwich Police Department and Fire Department: 911

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- Connecticut State Police Emergency Services Unit: Notification on a 24/7/365 basis by calling the State Police dispatch line at (800) 842-0200.
- Connecticut State Police, Troop E, Montville: (860) 848-6500
- Emergency contact for procedures for the U.S. Postal Inspection Service relies on a toll free call to 1-877-876-2455, a twenty-four hour emergency number to contact the local Duty Inspector. Once the number is reached you are presented with a number of options. Select Option 2 for emergency situations and the call will automatically be routed to a special operator for assistance.
- Federal Bureau of Investigation: (203) 777-6311