

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

17. ANTHRAX, WHITE POWDER AND OTHER BIOLOGICAL SUBSTANCES AND THREATS

OVERVIEW:

Incidents involving actual exposures to anthrax, as well as the potential threat of anthrax exposure resulting from hoax and unknown white powder threats have prompted a number of agencies to develop protocols for dealing with actual or potential exposure.

The Connecticut State Police Emergency Services Unit has developed protocols to deal with anthrax and the potential threat of exposure resulting from anthrax hoax and unknown white powder threats using the State Department of Public Health Guidelines.

Biological hazards such as anthrax enter the body through the skin, through ingestion, or through inhalation. Of the three methods of exposure, inhalation of anthrax spores is the most serious. Exposure to anthrax does not mean a person is infected with the bacteria. It takes 8000 to 10,000 spores inhaled to become infected with anthrax and just one spore that can be identified to say a person has been exposed.

The first responders to any emergency on Campus should be the Norwich Police and Fire Departments contacted through the **911** emergency number. However, the primary agency for dealing with and mitigating actual or threatened use of anthrax is the Emergency Services Unit of the Connecticut State Police.

Additional agencies with jurisdiction in this area that respond to or investigate actual anthrax and white powder threats are the Federal Bureau of Investigation contacted through its New Haven Office and the United States Postal Inspection Service. Emergency contact numbers for all agencies with jurisdiction in this type of incident are set forth below.

In all instances where an envelope or package containing a powder and anthrax threat, or suspicious envelope or package with a powder inside is received, the Maintenance Department should be contacted to determine if the air handling system to the room can be isolated to prevent spreading any contaminants.

PRIORITY EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION CONTACT INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES:

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

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Security on the College Emergency Hotline Number as soon as possible. The Security Desk direct outside line, interior extension Emergency Hotline 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
- Three Rivers Community College Assistance Number: 22222
- Director of Facilities: Office: (860) 215-9236; Cell: (860) 995-5343
- Norwich Police Department and Fire Department: 911
- 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

POTENTIAL SITUATIONS

- **Suspicious Unsolicited, Unexpected Or Unwanted Letters.**

Mailings from marketing companies will often have no return address. If there is no return address and the letter is unwanted, destroy it. If the letter is suspicious it can be sealed in plastic bags and incinerated or it can be soaked in a 50/50-bleach water solution for an hour or until thoroughly saturated then destroyed. Do not put the unwanted letter through a shredder. Thoroughly wash hands after handling the mail.

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- **Suspicious Packages.**

Packages should be considered suspicious if they include excessive postage, poorly written or misspelled labels, incorrect titles or titles but no name, contain oily stains, emit unusual odors, have no return address, or are marked personal or confidential. Every attempt should be made to identify and contact the sender of a package, to determine the legitimacy of the delivery; and once the legitimacy of the delivery has been verified the package can be opened provided it does not appear to have been tampered with. Packages that cannot be verified or appear to have been tampered with should be handled by the State Police Emergency Services Unit.

- **Letters with Powders Inside.**

If a letter is opened and either a threatening note or a suspicious powder is found inside do not panic. There have been many threatening notes and hoax powder incidents ultimately determined not to be associated with any biological hazard. Furthermore, many commonly shipped items are dusted with a cornstarch powder by the shipper to prevent moisture, static electricity or keep items from sticking to the packaging. Many cases can be easily resolved with a simple call to the manufacturer or shipping company.

If there is a suspicious substance or a threat **do not shake** the letter **or carry** the suspected item away from the area. Place the suspect item inside a plastic bag or other container. Advise other people in the area to move away to limit the possibility of anyone else being exposed. After the suspect item is covered or sealed follow the notification procedure as detailed in the Overview and Priority Emergency Notification Contact Information and Procedures sections above.

Keep calm but isolate yourself from other people. Anthrax is not contagious but spores can be spread through direct contact. Before you leave the area make sure you know where you are going and your supervisor or someone else is aware of your location. For your own safety and the safety of those you come in contact with while still on Campus follow the personal decontamination procedures detailed below.

The United States Postal Service poster inserted on the last page of this section provides examples of suspicious letters and parcels.

- **Unknown Powders Associated With a Threat or Suspicious Circumstances.**

If this condition exists police should be notified immediately; follow the notification procedure as detailed in the Overview and Priority Emergency Notification Contact Information and Procedures sections above.

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Follow the same rules set forth in the preceding paragraph for isolating the area with the contaminate to contain the material to a small clean up zone. Remove those exposed to another area and keep them together as a group. Isolate this group from other employees or students not exposed to reduce the number of possible decontamination subjects.

Collection and sampling of the material will be performed by the State Police Emergency Services Unit or the FBI. Samples must be handled as evidence because these incidents will be prosecuted.

- **Unknown Powder Discovered in Isolated Areas.**

If powder has been found by a sink in a bathroom, **isolate the area** until the matter can be checked into. Determine if anyone has been in direct contact with the substance or anyone who could have been exposed. These people should be removed from the area of possible contamination to another area but should be kept together until the matter can be resolved. Inquiries with the Maintenance Department, the cleaning staff, staff, faculty and visitors in the area should be made for knowledge of the substance or potential exposure.

If there is no exposure to anyone and there is no threat involved, spraying the substance with the 50/50 bleach and water solution will kill bacteria if it was ever there in the first place. Allow the solution to soak for 15 minutes, then clean up the power paste and discard and wash your hands.

DECONTAMINATION:

This is simply another term for a good cleaning of your body and packaging of possibly contaminated garments.

Unless the Connecticut state police emergency services unit respond with contained shower trailers, there is a shower facility located in the Central Utility Plant (CUP building) that has been designated as the preferred decontamination shower site.

In the event of the need for emergency decontamination the CUP building should be used for decontamination showers.

Prior to decontamination, you should make arrangements to have a change of clothing and two garbage bags brought to the area. You may desire to contact a family member to bring fresh clothing and shoes; or work with the college staff to secure temporary clothing on site.

Under the plan the college will make every effort to have a supply of antibacterial soap for personal showers, appropriate hygiene products, and sweat clothes or garments to change into after a shower staged at the CUP building for such contingencies.

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Remove all clothing and jewelry and seal it in a plastic bag. Place the first bag inside of another plastic bag and seal it as well.

Shower completely head to toe and rinse, then repeat the process. Dress in clothing provided and the process is complete.

- **Storing of personal items and clothing:**

The State Public Health Laboratory cannot test, store and inventory personal belongings. Items submitted to the lab are not returned after testing. Take the double sealed clothing and secure it in a locker or a closet until test results are known. Once tests are determined negative for biological hazards the bag and contents are safe to open and launder. If a test is positive for any type of biological hazard, additional instructions about contaminated effects will be provided by the Connecticut State Police Emergency Services Unit and / or the State Public Health Laboratory.

TESTING:

The preliminary presumptive tests used on scene are not 100% reliable and are just used as field tests. The Center for Disease Control has advised that false positive field tests have resulted from spores of nonanthrax bacillus bacteria that are found in the environment.

As previously indicated items of evidence will be submitted to the State Public Health Laboratory for further testing. If a test is positive for any type of biological hazard, additional instructions will be provided by the Connecticut State Police Emergency Services Unit and / or the State Public Health Laboratory.

The State Public Health Laboratory has one contact number on their submission sheet and they do not call each individual. Three Rivers Community College, Arnie DelaRosa - Director of Facilities, is the designated point of contact for test results with all contact numbers provided as listed in the Priority Emergency Notification Contact Information and Procedures section above.

A complete list of everyone potentially exposed and a positive way to contact them once the test results are known should be provided to the Dean of Administration.

THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY COLLEGE ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT FOR EXPOSED INDIVIDUALS:

The appropriate representative of the Environmental Health and Safety Committee, College Employee's Assistance Representative, Director of Facilities, individual's supervisor, should be designated as points of contact for individuals involved in the incident to contact to ask questions during the night or after everyone else has left.

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SYMPTOMS AND TREATMENT:

Biological agents have an incubation period in the body before any symptoms are known. Depending on the biological agent, the time needed to show symptoms may range from a single day to several weeks.

Inhaled anthrax symptoms usually occur between one and seven days. The symptoms are much the same as the flu and may include fever, malaise, mild cough, or chest pains.

Cutaneous anthrax is the most likely form of infection caused from coming into contact with a powder from an envelope or another source. Cutaneous anthrax is highly treatable with antibiotics. The infected skin is marked by boil like lesions that turn into ulcers with a black center.

Intestinal anthrax has symptoms much like food poisoning with nausea, vomiting and fever followed by abdominal pain, vomiting of blood and diarrhea.

Treatment of biological agents is provided by medical facilities with a variety of antibiotics.

SUSPICIOUS MAIL OR PACKAGES

Protect yourself, your business, and your mailroom.

If you receive a suspicious letter or package:

- Stop. Don't handle.
- Isolate it immediately.
- Don't open, smell, or taste.
- Activate your emergency plan. Notify a supervisor.



If you suspect the mail or package contains a bomb (explosive), or radiological, biological, or chemical threat:

- Isolate area immediately
- Call 911
- Wash your hands with soap and water



To order this poster, call 1-800-332-0317.

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