

Mandatory stand-up talk

November 17, 2003

A suspicious package was discovered by an alert employee at the Greenville, SC, Airport Mail Facility. What made it suspicious? Threatening language on the outside of the package. Once discovered, the package was immediately isolated.

What are characteristics of suspicious packages and letters?

There are four broad categories of suspicious characteristics. An easy way to remember these is by the acronym SLAP: unusual **S**hape, **L**ook, **A**ddress features or **P**ackaging.

Unusual **S**hape

- Rigid, uneven, irregular or lopsided package.
- Package with soft spots, bulges or excessive weight.

Unusual **L**ook (odor or sound)

- Discoloration, oily stains or an unusual odor.
- Crystals, power or powder-like residue on the package or spilling out from the package.
- Protruding wires or aluminum foil.
- Ticking sound.

Unusual **A**ddress features

- Suspicious or threatening language on the outside of the package or letter.
- Postmark that doesn't match the return address or no return address.
- Restrictive endorsements such as "Personal" or "Confidential."
- Distorted handwriting, block-printed or poorly typed addresses.
- Excessive postage.
- Title but no name or incorrect title.
- Misspelled addressee's name, title or location.
- Misspelled common words.
- Addressee unknown or no longer with organization.
- Unexpected mail from a foreign country.

Unusual **P**ackaging

- Excessive tape or string.

If I discover a suspicious letter or package, what should I do?

You can look at the process of dealing with a suspicious package or letter as three simple steps — Package, People, Police.

- Package — don't handle it. Isolate the area.
- People — evacuate the area around the package and notify your supervisor.
- Police — contact the Inspection Service, local police and community first-responders.