

Mandatory stand-up talk

June 4, 2004

As Postal Service employees, each of us may have different roles and different customers. But we all have one job in common: providing the best service possible – as safely as possible. That means we have to be more alert than ever to protect ourselves and our friends, relatives and neighbors who rely on the mail. And, with a daily mail volume of more than 650 million pieces, we have to depend on each other be aware and do the right thing if we see something in the mail that makes us suspicious.

Following a few simple procedures can protect you, the people you work with and the people you serve. They can also reduce any service impact. So, here are a few simple rules that will help you know what to look for – and what to do – if you come across suspicious mail. Remember, your safety is our primary concern. Keeping these rules in mind will help you stay safe.

What are characteristics of suspicious packages and letters?

You've heard the acronym SLAP before. It's an easy way to help you identify suspicious mail. There are four broad categories of suspicious characteristics. And each letter in SLAP can help you remember them. "S" for unusual **S**hape. "L" for unusual **L**ook. "A" for unusual **A**ddress features. Finally, "P" for unusual **P**ackaging. Let's talk about each one.

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, Plan.

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