

# City of Topeka Policy

## Handling Suspicious and Contaminated Mail

### HANDLING SUSPICIOUS AND CONTAMINATED MAIL POLICY

**Purpose:** To establish a policy on the handling of suspicious and possibly contaminated mail.

**Applicability:** To all city employees.

**Effective Date:** March 1, 2006

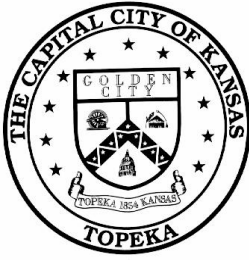
#### 1. PROCEDURE

##### A. How to Handle Suspicious and Possibly Contaminated Mail:

1. Examine unopened envelopes/packages and look for suspicious features
2. Handle incoming mail in a designated, separate mail area
3. Wash your hands after mail is opened
4. Restrict mailroom access to authorized persons

##### B. Types of Suspect Mail:

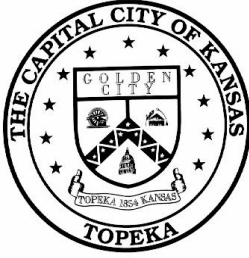
1. Excessive postage, no postage, or non-cancelled postage
2. No return address or fictitious return address
3. Improper spelling of names, titles, or locations
4. Unexpected envelopes from foreign countries
5. Suspicious or threatening messages written on packages
6. Postmark with different location than return address
7. Hand delivered items that would normally be mailed
8. Distorted handwriting or cut and paste lettering



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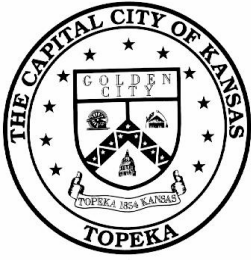
9. Unprofessionally wrapped packages or excessive use of tape string, etc.
  10. Packages marked “Fragile-Handle with Care”, Rush-Do Not Delay”, “Personal” or Confidential”
  11. Rigid, uneven, irregular or lopsided packages
  12. Packages discolored, oily, or an unusual odor
  13. Packages with soft spots, bulges, or excessive weight
  14. Protruding wires or aluminum foil
  15. Visual distractions
- C. What to do with a suspicious unopened letter or package marked with threatening message such as anthrax:
1. Remain calm. Do not open, shake, or empty the contents of any suspicious envelope or package.
  2. Do not carry the package or envelope, show it to others, or allow others to examine it
  3. Place the envelope or package in a plastic bag or some other type of container to prevent leakage of contents.
  4. 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 remover this cover.
  5. Then leave the room and close the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering. Do not wander around the area. Stay in one place.
  6. Wash your hands with soap and water to prevent spreading any powder to your face.



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7. Notify your supervisor. The supervisor will notify authorities if appropriate.
  8. List all people who were in the room or area when this suspicious letter or package was recognized.
- D. What to do with an envelope with powder and powder spills out onto surface:
1. Do not try to clean up the powder.
  2. Do not touch your eyes, nose, or other body parts.
  3. Stay put, but request assistance.
  4. Advise others to secure the room, close the door, and prevent others from entering.
  5. Have someone else shut off window air conditioning units and fans.
  6. Do not touch anything or do anything. Sit quietly and calmly until First Responders arrive.
  7. First Responders will advise how to proceed, based on their assessment of the situation.
- D. Air Handling System/Aerosol Contamination:
1. Turn off local fans or ventilation units in the area. **Have several people designated for this purpose, so that no matter what shift, someone can immediately stop the air-handling units.**
  2. Leave area immediately.
  3. Close the door or section off the area to prevent other from entering.
  4. Shut down air handling system in the building (if possible).
  5. List all people who were in the room or area.



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THIS POLICY SPECIFICALLY REPEALS AND REPLACES PRIOR CITY POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDA RELATIVE TO SUSPICIOUS AND CONTAMINATED MAIL.

Approved:

Neil Dobler, Acting City Manager  
February 15, 2006