

uspsnewsbreak p.m.

Oct. 22, 2003 6:30 p.m.

Greenville, SC, AMF closed for tests after poison ricin found in small, sealed container

A suspicious envelope discovered by an employee processing mail at the Greenville, SC, Airport Mail Facility (AMF) was later found to contain a small sealed metal container with the poison ricin inside.

As a precautionary measure, the AMF was closed so it can be tested for the presence of the toxic chemical. When the envelope was found last Wednesday, the supervisor on duty took immediate action to isolate the item from the mailstream and notified county officials and the FBI.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) tested the envelope's contents and found that it contained ricin (pronounced RICE-in). Additional testing is being done to make absolutely sure about the container's contents.

The CDC said there are no indications of employee exposure or adverse health effects as a result of the incident. The Department of Homeland Security said it doesn't believe the incident is an act of terrorism. The department noted that the sealed envelope contained a threatening note and said the FBI and the Inspection Service — along with other federal, state and local law enforcement officials on the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force — are cooperating to determine the source of the ricin.

USPS sent a nationwide message to all employees today alerting them to the incident and asking them to remain alert for suspicious letters or packages.

PLEASE COPY AND POST ON ALL EMPLOYEE BULLETIN BOARDS.

PUBLISHED BY PUBLIC AFFAIRS & COMMUNICATIONS, WASHINGTON, DC 20260-3100

USPS EAGLE SYMBOL AND LOGOTYPE ARE TRADEMARKS OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.