

BOMBS by MAIL

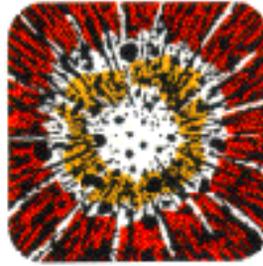


UNITED STATES POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE

Notice 71, February 1998



BOMBS by MAIL



The likelihood of your ever receiving a bomb in the mail is remote. Unfortunately, however, a small number of explosive devices have been mailed over the years resulting in death, injury, and destruction of property.

What can you do to help prevent a mail bomb disaster? First, consider whether you or your organization could be a possible target. Some motives for mail bombs include revenge, extortion, love triangles, terrorism, and business disputes.

Keep in mind that a bomb can be enclosed in either a package or an envelope, and its outward appearance is limited only by the imagination of the bomber. However, some unique characteristics of mail bombs may assist the identification of a suspect mailing. To apply these characteristics, it is important to know the type of mail your organization or your home receives.

-  Mail bombs may bear restricted endorsements such as "Personal" or "Private." These characteristics are important when the addressee does not usually receive personal mail at the office.
-  Addressee's name or title may be inaccurate.
-  Return address may be fictitious or not available.
-  Mail bombs may have distorted handwriting or the name and address may be prepared with homemade labels or cut-and-paste lettering.
-  Mail bombs may have protruding wires, aluminum foil, or oil stains and may emit a peculiar odor.

-  Cancellation or postmark may show a different location than the return address.
-  Mail bombs may have excessive postage.
-  Letter bombs may feel rigid, or appear uneven or lopsided.
-  Package bombs may be unprofessionally wrapped with several combinations of tape used to secure the package and may be endorsed "Fragile-Handle With Care" or "Rush-Do Not Delay."
-  Package bombs may have an irregular shape, soft spots, or bulges.
-  Package bombs may make a sloshing sound. Although placed devices may buzz or tick, mailed bombs generally do not.
-  Pressure or resistance may be noted when removing contents from an envelope or package.

IF YOU ARE SUSPICIOUS OF A MAILING AND ARE UNABLE TO VERIFY THE CONTENTS WITH THE ADDRESSEE OR SENDER:

1. DO NOT OPEN.
2. Isolate the mailing and evacuate the immediate area.
3. Do not put it in water or a confined space such as a desk drawer or filing cabinet.
4. If possible, open windows in the immediate area to assist in venting potential explosive gases.
5. If you have any reason to believe a letter or package is suspicious, do not take a chance or worry about possible embarrassment if the item turns out to be innocent—instead, contact your local police department and Postal Inspector for professional assistance.

Phone Numbers:

Police _____

Postal Inspector _____

LETTER PACKAGE BOMB INDICATORS

If you are suspicious of a mailing and are unable to verify the contents with the addressee or sender:

- DO NOT OPEN.
- TREAT IT AS SUSPECT.
- ISOLATE IT.
- CALL YOUR POSTAL INSPECTOR.
- CALL THE POLICE.

