



# CARLSBAD POLICE DEPARTMENT

## Department Training Bulletin

#6-2001

**Distribution Date:** October 15, 2001

**Subject:** Weapons of Mass Destruction

**Topic:** Anthrax Response

**Personnel:** All Sworn Personnel

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**Jim Hawks, Chief of Police**

Domestic terrorism poses a continuing threat to the citizens of the United States. Recent events and the latest intelligence indicate that those who may be responsible for such violence are now threatening the use of chemical and biological agents to disrupt government and to intimidate the public. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has several on-going investigations in which the biological agent Anthrax has been suspected and/or confirmed.

The threatened use of Anthrax by known terrorist groups has spawned a cynical and senseless series of hoaxes across the nation. While it is unknown at this time if the individual(s) responsible for such cases are linked to terrorist groups, or just undemanding criminals acting irresponsibly by taking advantage of the on-going international crisis. Either way, whoever is responsible with these actions, is using the United States Postal system, to cause numerous scares through hoax letters and telephone calls, as well as bonified documented Anthrax events.

The impact of such incidents can be greatly reduced if procedures and guidelines are set in place to assist potential recipients of Anthrax related mail threats. Just as there are existing procedures and checklists for bomb threats, these procedural steps are advised in Anthrax threat incidents.

### ***Understanding Anthrax***

Anthrax is a bacteria, which occurs naturally in cattle, sheep and other hooved animals. Approximately 15-20 cases of Anthrax occur each year in the United States, usually among workers associated with hooved animals. Anthrax (dry) is likely in the form of light brown colored spores that are harmful only if inhaled, ingested or if there is contact with an open wound. Inhalation of the spores is the greatest risk from Anthrax, while absorption through the skin does not occur. The incubation period is 1-7 days and the early symptoms are chills, fever, nausea and swelling of the lymph nodes. Anthrax is not contagious and can be treated with antibiotics.

Although Anthrax is considered a potential military biological weapon, there have been no recorded uses of Anthrax as a weapon by any nation. Likewise, until recently, there have been no known uses of Anthrax by terrorists. Collecting, culturing, and weaponizing Anthrax requires considerable skill, resources and commitment. Effective weaponization also requires a device capable of distributing an aerosolized spray.

### ***HANDLING OF ANTHRAX LETTERS/PACKAGES***

The following are general everyday procedures for those who handle large volumes of mail:

- Wash your hands with hot water and soap before and after handling mail. It is recommended that persons handling large quantities of mail wear latex gloves that are between .17 mil to 7.5 mil thick. This is especially true if you have open cuts or skin lesions on your hands.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke around mail. It is recommended that all incoming mail be kept in a designated room, away from workstations, water, lunchrooms, and bathrooms until distribution.
- Depending on the threat level of your duty station, a particulate respirator that can provide a minimum of 90% bacteria filtration protection should be worn while sorting through all incoming mail.
- Have a documented list of all written and/or verbal threats or potential threats that employees have received. Any mail that is being processed for them should be handled with extra care and sensitivity.
- Pay attention to detail.
- Develop mail handling protocol and continuously provide/receive training.

### **Handling A Credible Threat**

- Remain calm, stay at your workstation and contact your supervisor by telephone if practicable.
- Do not spread the suspected contaminant by allowing co-workers to gather or mingle at your workstation. Do not move around yourself and remain at one place.
- Wet any potentially contaminated area or article of clothing lightly, remove all potentially contaminated clothing and triple bag.
- Secure the target package by triple bagging it in plastic bags. Never discard the package.
- Do not shake, wave or throw the target package. Handle the package with extreme care.
- Immediately wash your hands, arms and any other potentially exposed body parts in hot water with soap for no less than one-minute. As soon as possible, discard clothing, and shower with hot water and soap.
- Contact local emergency personnel immediately.

## **Emergency Response To A Threat:**

- Glove Up and Mask Up.
- Determine the extensiveness of the threat. Your investigative findings will determine what type of threat you are dealing with.
- If you feel that the threat is credible, then contact the fire department for assistance.
- If the threat has no credibility, then utilize plastic bags located in your patrol vehicle to isolate the target package.
- All officer retained packages will be placed in a trashcan located in the sally port of the station.

## **Upon determining if the threat is credible:**

- Approach from upwind, uphill or upstream, but most important, keep away from contaminated persons or places, unless you are equipped with the proper gear to deal with the incident.
- Isolate immediate area for at least 300 feet in all directions.
- Keep unauthorized persons away (crowd control).
- Stay upwind.
- Make notifications (FBI, Department of Health Services)
- Decontaminate equipment (guns, knives, etc) with 5% bleach solution.
- Obtain immediate medical attention.

## **Signs to look for:**

- Packages without a return address
- Packages that contain stains, are wet, or have an unknown residue attached to them
- Unusual odor's
- Packages that have incorrect addresses or misspelled names
- Excessive postage

## **Signs and Symptoms of Anthrax**

### **Inhalation Route**

- Chest cold symptoms
- Fever
- No-productive cough
- Shortness of breath
- Shock
- Cyanosis
- Death

## **Ingestion Route**

- Intense stomach pain
- Bowel obstruction
- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Dehydration
- Death

## **Skin Route**

- Sore or blisters on exposed skin

The chances of contracting any disease from an envelope or other container are extremely low.

Any communication of an Anthrax threat or hoax is a violation of California Penal Code Section 422. Local law enforcement is the primary investigative agency until the threat is determined to be credible. Once a threat is deemed credible, a unified command of local law enforcement, local fire department, the Department of Health Services (DHS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) will be established, with the FBI serving as the primary investigative agency.

This training bulletin was put together by the Carlsbad Police Department's Professional Standards Division on October 15, 2001