

Responding to Letter and Mail Bombs

How to Recognize a Letter or Mail Bomb

Letter bombs, also called *mail bombs* or *package bombs*, might display one or more of these characteristics:

- mailed from a foreign country
- excessive postage; stamps vs. metered mail
- no return address, or false return address
- postmark differs from return address
- restrictive or special handling instructions (“special delivery” “air mail” “foreign mail”)
- misspelled words; poorly written or typed; poor handwriting; cut-and-paste letters
- addressed to a specific individual
- wrong title with name of addressee, or sent to a title without a specific name
- restrictive instructions (“to be opened by addressee only” “personal” “confidential”)
- addressee is not familiar with name and address of sender
- visual distractions (drawings, unusual statements, hand-drawn postage)
- letter-sized or larger package
- rigid, lumpy, or bulky envelope; stiffer or heavier than normal
- irregularly shaped
- lopsided or unevenly weighted package
- soft spots or bulges
- messily wrapped package; different types of tape; excessive wrapping or taping; string
- marked “fragile” “rush” “handle with care” or “do not delay”
- protruding wires, aluminum foil
- odd smells
- oily stains or discolorations

What to Do When You Receive a Suspect Package or Letter

- *Do not open any suspect letter or package.* Letter bombs may be triggered by a pressure release activated when the package is opened or when a string is cut.
- Isolate the suspect package, but do not put it into an enclosed space (such as a drawer, cabinet, or in water).
- Open windows in the immediate area.
- Contact police and other security officials immediately (bomb disposal, fire department, hospital, municipal officials, etc.).
- Activate the response team of the Emergency Preparedness Plan.
- Make decisions about evacuation.

Loss Control CFILC

Security Against Letter Bombs

- Centralize mail facilities, and locate them away from other work areas.
- Train mailroom personnel to recognize and respond to suspicious packages
- Provide training to non-mailroom staff in other departments who screen, sort, or distribute mail.
- Get a portable x-ray machine to screen suspicious packages.
- Instruct employees to report suspicious mail or packages, including special deliveries.

For more information, contact your local Hartford agent or your Hartford Loss Control Consultant.

Visit The Hartford's Loss Control web site at <http://www.thehartford.com/corporate/losscontrol/>

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