

Suspicious Packages

The likelihood of receiving a life-threatening package is remote. However, a small number of dangerous packages that can result in death, injury, or destruction of property are sent each year.

Background: Sometimes the motives for bombings and destructive or dangerous packages are revenge, extortion, terrorism, business disputes or political/sociological change.

Keep in mind that an explosive, or other life-threatening items - such as sharp objects, razorblades, biohazard or chemicals - can be enclosed in either a parcel or an envelope, and its outward appearance is limited only by the imagination of the sender. Suspicious packages have exhibited some unique characteristics which cant alert you to take precautions.

Things to Look For

Suspicious packages might bear some of the following signs:

- Unattended parcels, backpacks, or other items that appear out of place.
- Restricted endorsements such as "personal" or "private." This is important when the addressee does not normally receive personal mail at the office.
- Addressed with an inaccurate name and / or title.
- Distorted handwriting or a name and address prepared with homemade labels or cut-and-paste lettering.
- Protruding wires, aluminum foil, visible oil stains, or a peculiar odor.
- Excessive postage.
- Letter bombs might feel rigid or appear uneven or lopsided.
- Unprofessional wrapping with several combinations of tape used to secure the package and endorsements such as "Fragile-Handle With Care" or "Rush-Do Not Delay."
- Irregular shape, soft spots, or bulges.
- Buzzing or ticking noises or sloshing sounds.
- Pressure or resistance might be noted when removing contents from an envelope or parcel.

Action Steps

If you discover a suspicious package or letter and/or are unable to verify the addressee or sender, do not take a chance.

- Immediately contact UVM Police Services at [802-656-3473](tel:802-656-3473) or 911.
- Do not handle, shake, smell or taste it.
- Do not move, alter, open, examine or disturb the article.
- Do not move it or drive it to another location.
- Do not put in water or a confined space such as a desk drawer or filing cabinet.
- If possible, open windows in the immediate area to assist in venting any harmful substances.
- Isolate the package or article and clear the immediate area of people until help arrives. Have everyone leave the room and close the door if possible.
- Wash your hands thoroughly and await the arrival of emergency services.

For additional safety information, and access to messaging and contact information, install the UVM LiveSafe App by visiting <https://www.uvm.edu/police/livesafe-app>. This app lets you quickly, easily, and (if you choose) anonymously contact UVM Police.