

**Adams and Jefferson County Hazardous Response Authority
FIELD OPERATING GUIDELINES**

EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACTION PLANS

F.O.G. #: 1806

DATE: November 1, 2022

CATEGORY: Biological Agent Threats

PAGES: 3

I. Purpose:

- A. This is a protocol for response to incidents where the presence or release of suspicious substances, including powders and liquids, and presents the threat of exposure to bio-terror agents such as *Bacillus anthracis*. This protocol covers response from the initial call of a suspicious substance to the turn over of the scene to higher authority or a clean up company. It is for use for the AJCHRA personnel.

II. Guideline:

- A. **Determination of a Credible Threat:** Once the HazMat Officer is called, he/she will contact the RP and determine whether there is a credible threat. This can be completed by determining if the scene/article meets one or more of the following characteristics of suspicious letters and packages:
1. A threat was made or is directly associated with the letter or package.
 2. Opened letter or package has an unknown substance and threatening note. (Do not have RP open letter or package to try to find one)
 3. Location the suspicious letter or package was sent, such as a Federal, State, County or Local Government building, media office, high profile or controversial facility or business.
 4. Excessive postage.
 5. Poorly written or typed address.
 6. Incorrect Titles.
 7. Title but no name.
 8. Misspelled common words.
 9. Discolorations and or odors.
 10. No return address.
 11. Excessive tape or string.
 12. Visual distractions.
 13. Marked "Personal" or "Confidential" etc.
 14. Postmark does not match return address.
- B. Letter/container with unknown powder-like substance and threatening communication (with or without illness):
1. Since there is an articulated threat, it is likely that the substance was intentionally introduced into the package in an effort to validate that threat. An articulated threat itself (with or without the presence of a suspicious substance) is a federal crime and may also constitute a violation under state and local statutes. The HazMat Officer will need to determine the appropriate time and agencies to notify. The following are examples of agencies that may need to be notified: The local Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Coordinator and/or FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), 8th

(Colorado) Civil Support Team (CST) United States Postal Inspection Service, local law enforcement, Colorado Department of Health and Environment (CDPHE) and the local public health department and local hospital emergency department if patients were transported may all need to be notified

- C. **Response and Entry:** Once it has determined there is a credible threat the HazMat Officer will need to determine the necessary response. HM-1 and HM-4 are equipped with the FTIR's and Raman instruments. Once on scene, make direct contact with the R/P to determine the proper entry. The entry team should enter with pH paper(s), a 5-gas instrument to monitor the atmosphere, Ludlum 14C radiological monitoring equipment, and the proper equipment to take an appropriate sample (there needs to be enough sample to test with all testing means and possibly become evidence). Entry team should also place letter or package into appropriate packing to be taken as evidence or properly disposed of.
1. Samples should be packaged in "generalized triple packaging" as specified by CDC for shipment of biological agents (double bags with outer container). Samples should not be packaged in paint cans. Guidance for sample packaging is in Attachment C
- D. **Testing samples:** Test all samples starting with the Haz-Class protein per the manufacturer's instructions; if a positive test is recorded then notify the FBI WMD Coordinator for further instructions. If the protein kit is negative, test the sample with the FTIR and Raman and treat as a possible chemical Hazardous Material and classify appropriately.
1. The entry team should screen for the presence of chemicals and radiological material and double-bag in clear sealed bags (where possible), consistent with chain-of-custody requirements. Before packaging and when possible, photographs of the letter/container should be taken and relevant information should be documented, in coordination with the FBI WMD Coordinator.
 - a) Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES should an unprotected responder, such as a law enforcement officer, attempt to package an unknown substance.
 2. If this incident involves an unopened container such as a box, it must be evaluated by certified bomb technician/explosives ordinance disposal personnel prior to being handled by HAZMAT. Any such letters/packages must also be evaluated by the HAZMAT unit for only a broad class of radiological and chemical threats prior to being released to law enforcement personnel for transport. This is required by the laboratory in an effort to protect the staff members who will ultimately be opening the container and performing definitive biological testing and/or forensic examinations.
 - a) This field safety screening should be clearly documented and limited to screening for pH (for liquids), radioactivity, volatile organic compounds, flammable materials, and oxidizing agents. The FBI will then coordinate delivery of the evidence to the designated Laboratory Response Network (LRN) laboratory for further testing and analysis. Definitive analysis will only be performed by the appropriate laboratory. **No packages will be accepted at the CDPHE Lab without an initial notification.**

How to contact the State Laboratory

Laboratory Services Division
Public Health Microbiology and Serology Laboratories
8100 Lowry Blvd., Denver, Colorado 80230

Pager number: (877) 705-1016
Main phone number: (303) 692-3090

CDPHE 24-hour Emergency Response Line (877) 518-5608
CDPHE 24-Hour Epidemiological Hotline (303) 370-9395
CDPHE Disease Control and Environmental Epidemiology Division (DCEED) (303) 692-2700

- E. Letter/container with a threat but no visible powder or substances present:
 - 1. Merely threatening the use of a chemical or biological agent *is* a violation of federal law and merits investigation. As in scenario #1, all of the responders should be notified. Although no powder may be visible to the eye, there could be trace amounts of material present that could represent a health risk and also provide critical forensic evidence required for further investigation and prosecution. Therefore, the guidance in Scenario #1 also applies to responses to a letter/container containing a threat with no visible powder or substance.

- F. Letter/container with unknown powder, no articulated threat, and no illness:
 - 1. As there is no threat and no one is ill, it must be determined if there is a logical explanation for the presence of this substance. For example, HAZMAT teams have responded to a number of letters that contained crushed samples from vitamin and pain-relief companies. If a reasonable and defensible explanation can be given as to the source of the substance, that there is no articulated threat, and that no one is ill, then no further actions are necessary.
 - a) If, however, a reasonable source cannot be determined or there is any uncertainty, the steps outlined in scenario (D)(1) may be conducted.

- G. Letter/container arrives with no powder, no threat, the recipient is not ill, but the recipient is concerned about the package:
 - 1. With strict regard to federal criminal statutes, no investigative actions are necessary in this matter. However, if other threat indicators are present such as excess postage, misspelled names, unusual odors/colors, etc., law enforcement and the United States Postal Inspection Service should be notified to evaluate it for potential hazards. If the assessment determines that the letter/container is “suspicious,” then appropriate steps outlined in scenario (D)(1) would be initiated.

FBI WMD Coordinator (303) 629-7171 or (303) 630-6797
Dave Autrey