

Security Office Issues Precautions for Handling MTA Mail

(Oct. 19, 2001) With the continued concern about transmission of anthrax or other diseases through the mails, the MTA's Office of System Safety and Security is training mailroom personnel and is issuing a safety advisory to employees.

Noting that the MTA is not aware of "any credible threat targeting this agency or its employees," Security Chief Paul Lennon says, "You can be confident and assured that your MTA team is taking the necessary steps to educate and protect the safety and health..." of all employees and customers.



Derrell Young, a messenger/clerk, sorts interoffice envelopes in the MTA mailroom.

Lennon's office advises employees to take certain precautions if they receive strange, unusual or suspicious packages.

- Don't continue to handle the piece of mail or package.
- Notify your supervisor, who should immediately contact MTA Security at 922-7600.
- Make sure that suspicious packages are isolated and the immediate area cordoned off.
- Ensure that all those who touched the suspect mail are identified and immediately wash their hands with soap and hot water for at least a minute.

Mailroom employees and others who handle large volumes of mail also should:

- Wash their hands with soap and hot water before and after handling mail.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke around the mail.
- Use disposable latex gloves if they have open cuts or skin lesions on their hands.
- If a letter or package is received that contains powder or a written threat, employees who handle mail also should:
- Avoid panic.
- Not shake or empty the envelope or package.

Isolate the specific area of the workplace so no one disturbs the item.

- Call MTA Security at 922-7600.

Identify those who handled the envelope or package and keep them in the area until Security arrives and provides further instructions.

If you have questions about precautions, contact Pam Engelke, manager, Occupational Safety and Health, at 922-4249, or Ralph Sbragia, Safety Compliance inspector, at 922-7369.

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