



**Michigan Department of Community Health  
Guidelines to the General Public for Handling  
Bioterrorism Scares or Threats in Letters or Packages**

**This is intended to clarify what individuals should do at the home or workplace with suspicious letters or packages.**

- Do not open the letter or package. If the letter or package has already been opened and **powder spills out, do not clean it up.** Keep others away from the area.
- Immediately wash exposed skin with soap and water.
- Notify your supervisor if at work.
- Notify local law enforcement officials.
- Evacuate the area.
- Local law enforcement officials will, in conjunction with the FBI, do a risk determination and contact the state health department.
- If clothing is visibly contaminated, place these items in plastic bags, and keep the bags open so they are available for law enforcement agents to examine.
- Ensure that all persons who have handled the letter or package wash their hands.
- Start a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of all persons who have handled the letter or package. Share that list with law enforcement officials if requested.
- As soon as possible, shower with soap and water.
- Most biological agents do not produce rapid onset of symptoms. However, in the rare case that exposure causes unusual medical symptoms the individual exposed should be referred for medical evaluation.
- If you do have contact with health care providers, and are concerned about exposure to anthrax, do not request testing (e.g., a nasal swab culture) or treatment (e.g., ciprofloxacin or other antibiotic) unless directed to do so by local and/or state public health officials.

Be assured that the risk of actual exposure to biologic agents through contact with a letter or package is extremely low.

Please be patient. Public safety and health officials will respond as quickly as possible.