

INTERIM GUIDELINES FOR DECONTAMINATION PROCEDURES TO USE IN BIOTERRORIST THREATS INVOLVING SUSPECTED ANTHRAX POWDERED SUBSTANCES – OREGON, 2001

Updated 12/17/01

The following guidelines are for bioterrorist threats involving powdered substances, and are geared toward providing some basic information about site cleanup and decontamination. After a credible threat has been determined, hazardous materials (HAZMAT) teams and environmental cleanup crews should refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Interim Recommendations for the Selection and Use of Protective Clothing and Respirators Against Biological Agents

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/DocumentsApp/46a.pdf>

Steps to be taken immediately after identifying a suspicious substance (before reporting to law enforcement or health officials) are documented at

<http://www.oshd.org/acd/bioterr/home.htm>. Descriptions of potentially suspicious items can be found at www.usps.com/news/2001/press/pr01_1010tips.htm

and at <http://www.usps.gov/news/2001/press/mailsecurity/postcard.htm>.

CDC updated recommendations for handling suspicious packages or envelopes are found at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/DocumentsApp/Anthrax/10312001/han51.pdf>.

After a suspicious item has been reported, it can be grouped into two general categories, a credible threat or no credible threat. Law enforcement officials determine whether or not a credible threat is present.

No credible threat

The following three points refer specifically to routine activities in the absence of a credible threat.

1. *General Cleanup*: For mail sorting facilities, see CDC health advisory for mail handlers <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/DocumentsApp/Anthrax/10312001/han51.pdf>. In all other situations, clean as you normally would.
NOTE: Recommendations for routine activities at mail sorting facilities include voluntary use of disposable face masks (N-95 or N-100) with exhalation valve and powder free nitrile and/or vinyl gloves (nitrile gloves may be more durable). When these items are being used in routine work, they can be discarded in garbage bags, sealed (twist tie or knotted), and disposed of as general waste (municipal solid waste).
2. *Retention of Suspicious Substance or Items*: In general, there is no need to retain a sample of the low-risk powdered substance. In certain situations, law enforcement or exposed individuals may want to retain a sample of the substance for future use (e.g., as part of a criminal investigation, for laboratory testing in the event an exposed individual develops a disease). For storage, such a sample should be triple plastic bagged, labeled, and kept in a secure location. Label the outermost bag with date, contents, and a copy of the incident report. Keep the sample in a secure location for 60 days, then return to owner or dispose in the regular trash. Responsibility for maintaining the sample lies with the agency or individual who wants it retained. You are encouraged to develop and retain a list of the names and contact information of people who may have been exposed.
3. *Hand Washing*: Wash hands for up to 3 minutes with soap and warm water after removing gloves.

4. *Personal Clothing*: Wash with commercially available laundry detergent and water or dry clean.

In the absence of a credible threat, your risk of encountering anthrax is probably no greater than it was before September 11, 2001. The primary exception here may be mail sorters, because of their daily exposure to thousands of envelopes (one of which could be a credible threat) and the types of equipment used for rapid sorting. However, if you are still concerned and wish to disinfect surface areas use a 1:10 solution of household bleach (see below).

State Agency personnel can also refer to the Oregon Department of Human Services Guideline For Dealing With Questionable, Unknown Substances found at www.das.state.or.us.

Credible Threat

The following points refer specifically to situations where you have been informed by law enforcement or health agency personnel that a credible threat for anthrax exists:

1. *Cleanup/Decontamination*:
 - a. See Interim Recommendations for the Selection and Use of Protective Clothing and Respirators Against Biological Agents (www.bt.cdc.gov/DocumentsApp/46a.pdf.)
 - b. *Disposable Materials and/or Infectious Waste*: If the suspicious material is determined by law enforcement officials to be a credible threat, the Department of Environmental Quality will consider as infectious waste any disposable protective clothing, masks, gloves, sampling and cleaning materials, and contaminated small porous items that can be easily bagged. Infectious waste must be appropriately bagged in red biohazard bags, contained and labeled, then transported to an appropriate treatment (incineration or steam sterilization) facility for disposal in a landfill site operating under a permit issued by a state or federal agency. Refer to www.deq.state.or.us/wmc/solwaste/infect.html and to www.ohd.hr.state.or.us/acd/docs/infectw.htm for information on handling infectious waste.

Transporting anthrax-contaminated materials: There are specific hazardous materials requirements (HMR's) for commercial transportation of hazardous materials, including infectious substances such as anthrax-contaminated objects. Transportation of anthrax-contaminated materials by a federal, state, local government agency in a vehicle is not covered by USDOT Hazardous Materials Regulations. Anthrax-contaminated objects that have been treated so that the spores are destroyed are not subject to the HMR's. If complete decontamination prior to transport is not possible, then contaminated objects must meet the USDOT HMR triple packaging performance tests (drop/water immersion tests), and labeling requirements for shipping. For HMR information call USDOT, Office of Hazardous Materials Standards (1-800-467-4922), or refer to http://hazmat.dot.gov/guide_anthrax.htm

- c. *Decontamination of non-porous surface areas*: To decontaminate non-porous surface areas, use a 1:10 diluted 5.25% bleach solution (mix one part 5.25% bleach mixed with nine parts water). Note: Read the label on the bleach container to be sure it contains 5.25% hypochlorite. Wet down area to be

cleaned with solution and sponge, leave on surface being cleaned for 20 minutes, wipe off, and finally double rinse with clean water. Discard cleaning refuse as infectious waste.

- d. *Decontamination of porous surface areas:* Porous surfaces, such as carpeting, ceiling tiles, and upholstered furniture cannot be decontaminated by surface treatments. Small porous items such as *paper, cloth, small area rugs* may be disposed of as infectious waste as described below.
 - e. *Room/building/large materials decontamination (Final protocol is still in development):* In the event of verified anthrax-contamination, it may not be necessary to remove ceiling tiles, carpeting and furniture. Empty the building of all people and animals. Seal off the affected area(s), including the HVAC system before fumigation. HVAC systems need to be treated separately from other areas. Decontamination will be coordinated by various state and federal agencies.
 - f. *Retention of suspicious substances or items:* If there is a credible threat, law enforcement personnel will coordinate the collection and retention of samples of the suspicious substance, as part of a criminal investigation and for laboratory testing in the event an exposed individual develops a disease. Law enforcement will develop a list of the names and contact information of people who may have been exposed.
2. *Handwashing:* Wash hands for 3 minutes with soap and warm water after removing gloves.
 3. *Personal Clothing:* Persons exposed to the suspicious item(s) should remove outer clothing and store (triple plastic bagged, sealed, labeled) until the outcome of testing. If anthrax is confirmed, discard clothing as infectious waste (described above). Small personal items (keys, glasses, etc.) may be decontaminated using the bleach solution. Leather is porous and personal leather items need to be disposed of as infectious waste.
NOTE: If you are an emergency responder using disposable protective clothing, there is no need to remove additional personal clothing.
 4. *Showering:* Individuals should shower and wash their hair immediately upon returning home after leaving a credible threat site. On-site showering decontamination is NOT recommended.

Remember, even in the presence of a credible threat, in almost all of these events nationwide there has been no evidence of anthrax. Also, anthrax is not contagious from person-to-person. In the event of an actual anthrax exposure, preventative treatment is available.

For additional information, please check the websites or contact,

Department of Human Services – Public Health
Office of Disease Prevention and Epidemiology
800 NE Oregon Street
Portland, OR 97232
(503) 731-4024 (M-F, 8-5)
(503) 731-4030 (after hours)

www.ohd.hr.state.or.us

or

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.bt.cdc.gov