


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
 OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

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ANTHRAX eTool..... Protecting the Worksite against terrorism

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What should I do if I have an anthrax threat at my worksite?

The actions that will constitute an appropriate response for an anthrax threat will depend on how the threat was discovered and the credibility of a threat at your facility (for example, which zone your facility fits into on the [Anthrax Risk Reduction Matrix](#)).



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Discovery of Possible Contamination or Threat

Discovery of anthrax may occur in several ways:

- Physical evidence (such as a suspicious package containing powder),
- Epidemiological or medical observations (such as individual cases of anthrax), or
- Unsubstantiated threat (such as a phone call or letter stating that anthrax has been used).



The following links provide additional information about identifying suspicious packages:

- [Updated Information About How To Recognize and Handle a Suspicious Package or Envelope](#). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Health Advisory, CDCHAN-00050-01-10-31-ADV-N, (2001, October 31), 95 KB [PDF](#).
- [If you receive a suspicious letter or package, what should you do?](#) Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Advisory Poster, General Information Bulletin 2000-3, 287 KB [PDF](#).
- [United States Postal Service, Mail Center Security Website](#).
- [Video: Protecting Your Health for People Who Process, Sort, and Deliver the Mail](#). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Public Health Foundation, Bioterrorism/Emergency Preparedness.

Evaluate the Credibility of the Threat

The first step to take for a potential anthrax threat is to evaluate the credibility of the threat. This is done by evaluating where your facility fits on the [Anthrax Risk Reduction Matrix](#). The actions you should take if you have an anthrax threat at your worksite will



depend on your zone.

- Evaluate your facility using the [Anthrax Risk Reduction Matrix](#).

Determine What Actions You Should Take

After you have determined which zone your facility fits into on the [Anthrax Risk Reduction Matrix](#), the following table will help you determine what actions to take if you have an anthrax threat at your worksite.

Select the color zone title (green, yellow, red) to see corresponding response actions. ([Text Version](#).)

Nature of the Anthrax Threat	Response Actions		
	Green Zone A credible anthrax threat is unlikely at your facility.	Yellow Zone A credible anthrax threat is possible at your facility.	Red Zone Anthrax is strongly suspected or has been confirmed at your facility. The appropriate authorities should already be involved in the the anthrax mitigation efforts.
Physical evidence (such as a suspicious package containing powder)	1. Determine if there is a logical explanation for the "physical evidence" (such as a suspicious package or powder). Some examples may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If you receive a suspicious package, try to identify who sent it and call them to ask about it. ■ If you find suspicious powder, try to determine if the powder came from a logical source (such as a powdered soap dispenser, spilled baking soda box, construction debris, etc.). 2. If you determine that the "physical evidence" came from a logical source and it is not suspicious, it is unlikely that anthrax is present.		
Epidemiological or medical observations (such as individual cases of anthrax)	1. If one or more employees are exhibiting symptoms of anthrax: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Encourage them to see a health care professional to evaluate the cause of the symptoms. ■ Many of the anthrax symptoms are similar to common illnesses, such as the flu, and can cause unnecessary distress in the workplace. 2. If no confirmed cases of anthrax are discovered, it is unlikely that a credible threat of anthrax exposure exists at your worksite.		
Threat (such as a phone call or letter stating that anthrax has been used)	1. Call 9-1-1 and report the threat. An anthrax threat is a criminal act, regardless if the threat is credible or not.		
Physical evidence (such as a suspicious package containing	1. Determine if there is a logical explanation for the "physical evidence" (such as a suspicious package or powder). Some examples may include:		

<p>powder)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If you receive a suspicious package, try to identify who sent it and call them to ask about it. ■ If you find suspicious powder, try to determine if the powder came from a logical source (such as a powdered soap dispenser, spilled baking soda box, construction debris, etc.). <p>2. If you determine that the "physical evidence" came from a logical source and it is not suspicious, it is unlikely that anthrax is present.</p> <p>or</p> <p>If you cannot find a logical explanation for the "physical evidence:"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Initiate your Emergency Action Plan (EAP).
<p>Epidemiological or medical observations (such as individual cases of anthrax)</p>	<p>1. If one or more employees are exhibiting symptoms of anthrax:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Encourage them to see a health care professional to evaluate the cause of the symptoms. ■ Many of the anthrax symptoms are similar to common illnesses, such as the flu, and can cause unnecessary distress in the workplace. <p>2. If no confirmed cases of anthrax are discovered, it is unlikely that a credible threat of anthrax exposure exists at your worksite.</p> <p>or</p> <p>If a confirmed case of anthrax is discovered at your worksite:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Notify your local health department. Call 9-1-1 if you are unsure who to contact. ■ Follow the directions of the health department and help them determine if your workplace may have been the source of the exposure.
<p>Threat (such as a phone call or letter stating that anthrax has been used)</p>	<p>1. Call 9-1-1 and report the threat. An anthrax threat is a criminal act, regardless if the threat is credible or not.</p> <p>2. Notify your employees of the threat. Inform them to be cautious of suspicious mail/packages and to report any potential anthrax found in the workplace.</p> <p>3. If physical evidence is discovered, initiate your Emergency Action Plan (EAP).</p>
<p>Physical evidence (such as a suspicious package containing powder)</p>	<p>1. Notify the authorities overseeing mitigation of anthrax at your facility. If authorities aren't involved yet, call 9-1-1 and report the threat.</p> <p>2. Initiate your Emergency Action Plan (EAP), or continue EAP activities if already underway.</p>
<p>Epidemiological or medical observations (such as individual cases of anthrax)</p>	<p>1. Notify the authorities overseeing mitigation of anthrax at your facility. If authorities aren't involved yet, call 9-1-1 and report the threat.</p> <p>2. Follow the directions of the authorities overseeing mitigation to help them identify all persons who might have been exposed to anthrax.</p>
<p>Threat</p>	<p>1. Notify the authorities overseeing mitigation of anthrax at your</p>

(such as a phone call or letter stating that anthrax has been used)

facility. The threat may help them identify the source of the anthrax if not already identified. If authorities aren't involved yet, call 9-1-1 and report the threat.

Accessibility Assistance: Contact the OSHA Directorate of Technical Support and Emergency Management at 202-693-2300 for assistance accessing PDF materials.

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Page last updated: 11/16/2009