I. PURPOSE

To provide guidelines to agency members when responding to calls for service regarding suspicious mail or other items.

II. POLICY

Members of the Harford County Sheriff’s Office shall respond to calls involving suspicious mail or other items and follow the below guidelines to ensure that scene safety and integrity is maintained.

The intentional delivery of a biological or chemical agent by anyone is a crime. The false report of a chemical or biological event is a crime. Each report of an event shall be treated as a crime scene until it is determined to be otherwise.
Harford County Sheriff's Office
Policy #MAN4600: Suspicious Mail/Package/Items

4600.1 OPENED Suspicious Mail/Package/Item with residue VISIBLE

Responding Deputy
4600.1.1 Shall secure the outside of the house/building.
4600.1.2 Shall make contact with the complainant or victim.
Note: If the victim/complainant is contaminated or has been exposed, the deputy shall advise them to stay in place until HAZMAT arrives.
4600.1.3 Shall not make entry.
4600.1.4 Shall contact dispatch and request a HAZMAT Team response.
4600.1.5 Shall stand by for HAZMAT.
4600.1.6 Shall advise the HAZMAT Team of the evidentiary value of items at the scene.

4600.1.6.1 NOTE: HAZMAT personnel are not police and may not be familiar with procedures for evidence.
4600.1.7 Shall, prior to leaving the scene, advise the victim to contact their family physician and report the details of the incident.
4600.1.8 Shall complete an Original Report (SO-01) and a Property/Evidence Record (SO-258).
4600.1.9 Shall FAX/email a copy of the entire report to HCSO C.I.D., the Bel Air Resident Agent office of the F.B.I., and the Harford County Health Department, prior to the end of the shift.

Duty Officer
4600.1.10 As soon as it is determined that there is a credible complaint and exposure, shall immediately contact the Harford County Health Department at one of the following numbers:
4600.1.10.2 After hours and weekends – Environmental Health 443-807-1228.
4600.1.11 Shall, upon receiving the initial complaint contact the F.B.I. Command Center Baltimore, MD, and determine if they will become involved in the investigation.

Transport of Item
4600.1.12 The suspicious item shall be packaged per property and evidence procedures and policy.

4600.2 UNOPENED Suspicious Mail/Package

Responding Deputy
4600.2.1 Shall make contact with the complainant and determine if the complainant has a credible complaint.
4600.2.2 Should the complainant insist that the deputy take the item, the deputy shall remove the item and dispose of it according to this policy.
4600.2.3 Should the deputy determine that there is a credible complaint he/she will seize all suspicious items of evidentiary value.

4600.2.4 Shall, prior to seizing any items, utilize personal protection safety equipment (double glove, mask & goggles) and photograph the suspicious items and scene.

4600.2.5 Shall place the suspicious items into a plastic bag (double bag) and seal the bags.

4600.2.6 The suspicious item shall be packaged per property and evidence procedures and policy.

**NOTE:** Item should be triple bagged at this time.

4600.2.7 Shall complete an (SO-01) Original Report and a Property/Evidence Record (SO-258).

4600.2.8 Shall fax/email a copy of the entire report to HCSO Intelligence Unit, the Bel Air Resident Agent office of the F.B.I., and the Harford County Health Department, prior to the end of the shift.

**Duty Officer**

4600.2.9 Shall, upon receiving the initial complaint, contact the F.B.I. Command Center in Baltimore, MD, to inform them of the circumstances and determine if they will become involved in the investigation.

**NOTE: DEPUTIES SHOULD ALWAYS BE ALERT AND CAUTIOUS WHEN HANDLING SUSPICIOUS MAIL/PACKAGES/ITEMS FOR NOT ONLY BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL MATERIALS BUT ALSO EXPLOSIVES.**

*Reference CALEA 83.3*