



Jeffrey R. Gahler,
Sheriff

HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE OPERATIONS POLICY

Suspicious Packages

Distribution:	All Employees			Policy Number:	OPS 0707
Responsible Unit:	Patrol Operations Bureau			Rescinds:	MAN 4600
Original Issued Date:	12/12/21	Revision #:	1	Latest Revision Date:	07/12/23
Required 3-Year Review was Completed:	05/04/26			Next Required 3-yr Review Due	05/31/29

1. Purpose

To provide guidelines to Harford County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) employees when responding to calls for service regarding suspicious mail or other items.

2. Policy

HCSO employees will respond to calls involving suspicious mail or other items and follow the below guidelines to ensure that scene safety and integrity is maintained.

3. Procedures

A. Opened Package and Residue Visible

1. Responding Deputy will:

- a. Secure the outside of the house/building;
- b. Contact complainant and remove them from the dangerous area and isolate victim. Contact EMS if appropriate. If victim refuses EMS, advise victim they should consult with a medical physician of their choice;
- c. Refrain from making additional entry into residence or structure;
- d. Contact the Harford County Department of Emergency Services (DES) and request a HAZMAT Team response;
- e. Stand by for HAZMAT;
- f. Advise the HAZMAT Team of the evidentiary value of items at the scene;
- g. Interview the victim and get all pertinent information pertaining to the package;
- h. Complete an Incident Report in the Law Enforcement Records Management System (RMS) and a Property/Evidence Record ([SO-258](#));
- i. Complete a Supervisor's Incident Report (SIR) and Employee's Report of Incident (SO-016) if exposed to a substance. Email these two forms to the "Employee Injury" email group; and
- j. Email a copy of the entire report to Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC), Criminal Investigations Division (CID), HCSO Intelligence Unit, and the Harford County Health Department prior to the end of the shift.

2. Duty Officer

- a. If a HAZMAT scan indicates that a viable threat exists, immediately contact the Harford County Health Department. Upon receiving a positive HAZMAT scan, contact MCAC and the FBI Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Coordinator.

3. Transport of Item

- a. Once packaged by HAZMAT and with the approval and coordination of the local health department, transport the package to the Maryland Laboratory Response Network (MLRN). 410-925-3121.

B. Unopened Suspicious Mail/Package

1. Responding Deputy will:

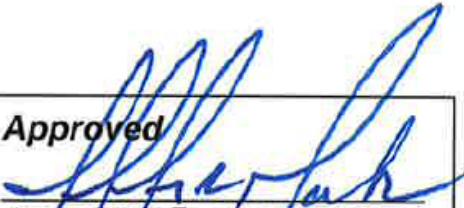
- a. Contact the complainant and determine if the complainant has a credible complaint;
- b. If deemed suspicious, do not touch or manipulate the item;
- c. Have everyone exit the home or clear the area;
- d. Utilize personal protection safety equipment to photograph the suspicious item and scene before exiting the house or clearing the area;
- e. Contact HAZMAT for proper screen for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC), Radiation, Energetic material;
- f. If a HAZMAT scan indicates a viable threat HAZMAT will properly secure and make safe the package;
- g. Contact MCAC with case information and request the package be picked up by FBI WMD Coordinator;
- h. Complete an Incident Report in the RMS and a Property/Evidence Record ([SO-258](#)); and
- i. Email a copy of the entire report to MCAC, CID, HCSO Intelligence Unit, and the Harford County Health Department, prior to the end of the shift.

2. Duty Officer

- a. Upon a positive HAZMAT scan assure proper notifications are made to the Health Department, MCAC, and FBI WMD Coordinator. Assure a Bureau text has been sent.
- b. Contact MCAC with the case information and request the package be picked up by the FBI WMD Coordinator.

4. Summary of Changes

- A. 08/04/23 Revision number one
 - 1. Various changes were made throughout OPS 0707 Suspicious Packages policy to conform to guidance provided by MCAC, HazMat, and DES.
- B. On 05/04/26 the Agency 3-year policy review was conducted, and no changes were made to this policy.

Approved

JEFFREY R. GAHLER
SHERIFF
DATE 8.4.23