



*The National Explosives Task Force (NETF) coordinates rapid integration of explosives expertise with intelligence and Law Enforcement information to support operational activities. Products are peer-reviewed by explosives experts from participating agencies.*

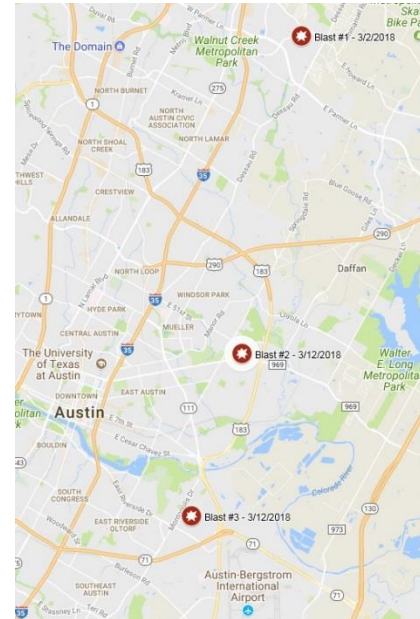
## National Explosives Task Force Awareness Bulletin

March 12, 2018

### Two Fatalities in Austin, Texas from Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) Concealed as Packages

Over the past two weeks, three incidents involving placed package bombs in Austin, Texas were reported to the National Explosives Task Force (NETF).

- March 12, 2018, a package was found on the front porch of a residence in Austin, Texas. Upon opening the package, the device functioned injuring an elderly woman.
- March 12, 2018, an individual opened a package found on their front porch in East Austin, Texas. A teenager was killed and a woman sustained severe injuries.
- March 2, 2018, an individual was seriously injured and later succumbed to his injuries after opening a package that had been left on the front porch of their residence in Austin, Texas.



Package bombs, which include letters, parcels, and anything delivered by postal or courier service are not a new technique and have been used by terrorists and anarchist groups. While primarily victim-operated, they can contain various explosive charges and initiating systems.

The recent package bomb incidents do not change the current methods and techniques for detecting this type of IED. It is recommended to review existing procedures for screening packages, identifying suspicious items, and instituting the appropriate safety protocols. If no current procedures are in place, guidance should be sought from local, state, and/or federal resources. Planning considerations should include (but not be limited to) recurring training for screeners, an understanding of the standards and limitations for operating times, and regularly scheduled maintenance of screening equipment, such as calibration, updates, and testing.

Package bombs come in a variety of shapes and sizes, and may look harmless. There are a number of characteristics that may lead you to become suspicious of a letter or package.

## SUSPICIOUS MAIL OR PACKAGES

**Protect yourself, your business, and your mailroom.**

**If you receive a suspicious letter or package:**

- Stop. Don't handle.
- Isolate it immediately.
- Don't open, smell, or taste.
- Activate your emergency plan. Notify a supervisor.

The diagram illustrates two examples of suspicious mail. The top example is a letter addressed to 'CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, 222 N. HARVE ST., PHILADELPHIA'. It features several redaction markers: 'PERSONAL!' written in large black letters, 'Restrictive markings' pointing to a circular stamp, 'No return address', 'Misspelled words. Badly typed or written.' pointing to 'OFFICER', 'Sealed with tape' pointing to the top flap, 'Unknown powder or suspicious substance' pointing to a small white mark, and 'Possibly mailed from a foreign country. Excessive postage.' pointing to four postage stamps. The bottom example is a cardboard box addressed to 'Operations Manager, 5032 D 1ST, Annapolis, MD'. It has several redaction markers: 'Operations Manager, 222 M st, Saville, MO' on a return address label, 'DO NOT X RAY TAPE ENCLOSED' on a white label, 'Excessive tape' pointing to the top flap, 'Oily stains, discolorations, crystallization on wrapper.' pointing to the bottom left corner, 'Strange odor' pointing to the bottom center, 'Incorrect title or addressed to title only.' pointing to the address label, 'Rigid or bulky' pointing to the box's shape, 'Lopsided or uneven.' pointing to the bottom right corner, and 'Protruding wires.' pointing to the bottom right corner.

**If you suspect the mail or package contains a bomb (explosive), or radiological, biological, or chemical threat:**

- Isolate area immediately
- **Call 911**
- Wash your hands with soap and water

<https://about.usps.com/posters/pos84.pdf>

If a letter or package is deemed suspicious:

- Stop! Do not handle or open.
- Evacuate and isolate the immediate area.
- Activate the facility's emergency plan.
- Make note of the characteristics that caused suspicion.
- Call 911.

While the high volume of mail does not permit the U.S. Postal Service to screen every package and letter, public safety resources are available to respond quickly if a suspicious item is found.

## UNCLASSIFIED

The NETF prepared this document as a reminder of the ongoing use of package bombs and the need for diligence and safety procedures in evaluating suspected IEDs. Any render safe actions should be performed only by FBI Hazardous Devices School (HDS) certified public safety bomb technicians or current US military explosive ordnance disposal technicians.

The U.S. Government has resources available to citizens and businesses related to parcel bombs, such as: <https://about.usps.com/securing-the-mail/mail-security-center.htm>.

To report suspicious activity call 9-1-1 or contact local law enforcement.

Suspicious activity reports (SARs) will be forwarded to the appropriate fusion center and FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force for further action. For more information on the Nationwide SAR Initiative, visit: <https://nsi.ncirc.gov/resources.aspx>.

*For further information, contact the NETF at [NETF@fbi.gov](mailto:NETF@fbi.gov)*

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