

From: EH&S Biological Safety <ehsbio@uw.edu>
Sent: Monday, August 31, 2020 10:46 AM
To: uwbiosafety@uw.edu
Subject: FBI Notification: East Coast COVID-19 Researcher Threat Letters

Dear UW research community,

We have received unfortunate reports from our contacts at the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) that threatening mail has been sent to COVID-19 researchers on the east coast of the United States. The mail did contain an unknown substance that has not yet been identified as a hazardous substance; however, confirmatory testing to identify the substance is not yet complete.

The health and safety of UW researchers and our UW community is our highest priority. If you receive any suspicious mail or package at work or at home:

1. Do NOT open the mail or package. Do not handle the item. Wash hands thoroughly if you did handle the item.
2. Move others away from the suspicious item.
3. Contact the police by calling 911.
4. Follow the directions of the police. Avoid creating panic.
5. Notify the UW Environmental Health & Safety Department (EH&S) Research and Occupational Safety section at 206-221-7770. Also submit an online incident report at [UW OARS](#). EH&S will notify the FBI and other regulatory and law enforcement groups in coordination with the local law enforcement agency.

Suspicious mail may have:

- Excessive postage
- Excessive tape
- An address with misspelled words, badly typed or handwritten, and addressed to a title and not a person
- No return address
- Restrictive markings such as “special delivery” or “personal”
- Oily stains, discoloration, or a strange odor
- Be rigid or bulky, lopsided or uneven, or have a weight that seems odd for its size.

Also refer to this [Suspicious Mail Poster](#) from the United States Postal Service.

The University will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates to the research community as needed. Please talk with your fellow researchers, and review your lab’s response procedures for emergencies. If you have questions, please contact EH&S Research and Occupational Safety at 206-221-7770 or ehsbio@uw.edu.

Sincerely,

ZARA LLEWELLYN, PHD, RBP

Assistant Director for Research & Occupational Safety
Biological Safety Manager
Alternate Responsible Official
Environmental Health & Safety Department