

No. 444/2020

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Our Ref: E1/20

To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

Royal Mail Group (SHE) Safety Flash – Suspect Parcels & Packages – Dealing With Incidents Correctly:

Introduction:

A Safety Flash has been issued by the Royal Mail Group Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) Team (copy attached), following a recent 'Suspect Parcel' incident at a Mail Centre. The Mail Centre experienced an unnecessary and prolonged evacuation and shut down following the failure of Mail Centre Management to follow the correct process for responding to suspect parcels as set out in the Royal Mail Group 'Stay Calm' manual.

Background and SSoW Failures:

A Mail Centre employee handled a parcel leaking a white powder, which later caused a skin reaction to her hands. Emergency services were called for an ambulance, without going through the correct risk assessment process or calling Central Postal Control (CPC).

Impact and Effect of the Incident:

The emergency services (Police, Fire & Rescue Service and Ambulance Service) are aware that Royal Mail Group has long experience and a high level of knowledge in dealing with suspect parcels and hence, they tend to assume that if Royal Mail or Parcelforce report a suspicious item, it is serious, and will rapidly attend the site, evacuate the building and bring in their Detection, Identification and Monitoring (DIM) Units with specialist enhanced command support vehicles which includes scientific analysis equipment, infrared spectrometers, radiation survey meters, gas detectors, specialist personal protective equipment (PPE) and decontamination equipment etc. This takes many hours and causes unnecessary stress and anxiety to all staff on site. In the case in question a huge presence of Police, Fire and Rescue and Ambulance vehicles and crews were in attendance and involved in what was a minor incident.

Key Managers' Activities and Learning Points set out in the Safety Flash are:

- All managers are expected to complete the 'suspect parcel e-learning programme' which provides a simple to follow guide to risk assess different types of suspicious items and how to respond appropriately.

- PICs and Line Managers should ensure their management team have completed the e-learning programme.
- Managers to refer to 'Stay Calm' on line which provides full advice and guidance at <https://staycalm.online/>
- If Managers are in any doubt, and before any office calls 999 (unless for an obvious emergency), CPC must be contacted to help guide the office through the 'suspect parcel' risk assessment process. The direct number for CPC is: 0345 266 1060.
- When dealing with a suspect package the following initial questions should be asked (1) Has there been any physical reactions to the item? (2) Are there any physical signs that the item may be suspicious? (3) Does the item appear to have been sent maliciously?

Area Health and Safety Reps

Would all CWU Area Health and Safety Reps please note and communicate the content of the Safety Flash, supporting the key messages and learning points, reminding members of the importance of looking after their own safety as well as the safety of work colleagues when dealing with suspect and leaking parcels and packages.

Please find attached a copy of the '**Stay Calm Manual.**' Managers would typically access this through the intranet.

The '**Stay Calm Manual**' is the Royal Mail Group's guidance and information on specific incidents (including fires and managing an evacuation, gas leaks, floods, severe weather, **suspect items** and many others) and it is now available online. The online version of the manual is accessible to anyone with a laptop, tablet or mobile phone.

To access the site, go to: <http://staycalm.online/>. Once on the site, you can access the Stay Calm guidance by clicking on the **on-site response** (PiC or operational manager on site dealing with an incident). This will allow you to scroll through the site to the following areas:

- Evacuation guidance
- Incident specific guidance
- Preparing for an incident

(Please note the CPC and business response pages are password protected, so you won't be able to access those).

Any Management enquiries can be directed to:

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Business Protection Manager
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Attachments:

- RMG 'Stay Calm Manual'
- RMG SHE Safety Flash 'FY20 016-Suspect Parcels'

Yours sincerely



Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer