



THE AMERICAN HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION BIOCHEMICAL CLEAN UP PROTOCOL

The following steps are to assist lodging properties in the event of a possible biochemical incident concerning a suspicious powder or substance from an envelope or package. While such incidents might be hoaxes or have innocent explanations, you must assume that each threat is real for the purposes of reacting to them. The most important steps in this type of emergency are to isolate and confine the substance, effected area, and person(s) as well as their clothing.

If you are an individual who discovers a suspicious powder or substance:

- ☐ Remain calm and try not to cause any undue harm to yourself or excite others.
- ☐ Isolate the suspected envelope or package containing the unknown powder or substance. Do not attempt to handle, move, clean up, or remove the contents.
- ☐ Notify the management staff or building security personnel at your hotel.
- ☐ Immediately wash your hands and forearms with soap and water to remove any of the unknown substance and to prevent it from spreading to other areas of your body.
- ☐ Remove any contaminated articles of clothing and try not to further handle them.
- ☐ If you are in a guestroom, consider showering with cool water and wait for assistance.
- ☐ If you are not in a guestroom or area that has access to wash facilities, leave the vicinity immediately and close the door. Seal the area off so no one else can enter.
- ☐ When applicable, turn off the area's local fans or ventilation units (adjust thermostat accordingly).

If you are a hotel employee who received a report about a biochemical incident:

- ❑ Call “911” and notify them of the situation and the steps you have taken.
- ❑ Follow any advice or instructions given by the 911 operator.
- ❑ Make a list of all persons who were in the area and may have had contact with the powder or substance.
- ❑ Isolate any person(s) who might have come into contact with the powder or substance in a secure room or area. Confirm that they have washed their hands and forearms (if necessary, their face and nose). Instruct them not to rub their hands over their clothing. Local authorities will advise the person(s) how to remove and bag their clothing from the premises.
- ❑ Take necessary precautions to ensure the area of potential contamination has been strictly sealed, limiting access only to the appropriate local authorities (fire and/or police departments).
- ❑ If possible, without entering the vicinity where the powder or substance is, shut down the ventilation systems in the area and consider shutting down the entire HVAC system.
- ❑ Once the local authorities arrive at the property, allow them to take charge of and assess the scene.

Please note: The powder or substance will be tested and if this substance is determined to be anthrax or some other hazardous material, the responding city or county Hazardous Material (HazMAT) departments will handle the clean up and removal of this substance.

Under some circumstances it may be necessary to evacuate a portion of or the entire lodging property. In most instances, local authorities will determine if you have to evacuate the property.

If the tests reveal that the powder or substance is not anthrax, then once the local authorities give you clearance to do so, clean the room or area according to normal operating procedures.

In the event the news media inquires about this incident, refer them to management or someone who is authorized to address reporters.

You may want to consider contacting a specialty contractor for hazardous materials clean up or for information regarding the purchase of an airborne biological contamination-testing machine. Often a vendor specializing in hazardous material clean up can identify the substance much quicker than local officials, thereby minimizing business interruption.