Strengthening Security In Company Mail Operations Teleconference

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Mail Security In A Large Corporate Environment

I. Understanding Threats To A Corporation's Mailstream

A. The threat to your mailstream affects your employees, your customers and the future of your business

B. Every industry, every individual, and every supply chain presents its own unique challenges

C. The primary threats to the mailstream have historically been from explosives and dangerous objects in letters and packages

D. More recently, we have seen the expansion of biological and chemical threats as viable alternatives to explosives

E. Anthrax is deadly but hard to manufacture; Ricin is easy to create but difficult to use effectively

F. There is a growing concern over chemical, radiological and nuclear threats as the threat of global terrorism continues

G. Hoaxes present a unique challenge that has proven to be difficult to counter

II. Identifying Risks In A Corporation's Mail Center

A. Completing a mail center security audit is the critical first step in reducing your risk

B. You need to know where your delivery vehicles are coming from and when they are scheduled to arrive

C. What are your procedures at the loading dock?

D. You won't let strangers in your front door; why are you letting them in the back door?

E. Nothing will stay in envelopes once you start processing them. In fact, if it's anthrax, it's already on the outside of the envelope (and all the rest of the mail and packages, too)

F. What are the routes that your mail handlers take when delivering and picking up mail?

G. How is mail delivered? To individual boxes in a central area? To multiple mail stops throughout the building? To individual recipients?

III. Simple Things You Can Teach Your Staff

A. Recognizing the visual characteristics of suspicious mail and packages requires both posters and practice. The USPS provides the poster, http://www.usps.com/postalinspectors/pos84.pdf, but your mail center manager needs to provide the practice

B. Use your other senses, too, when you are trying to find suspicious mail. Experienced mail handlers can feel, hear and smell that something's wrong. Tasting is always discouraged

C. A little light (bulb) goes a long way in helping you identify whether something is a risk or a paperclip

D. Gloves and masks should be made available to your employees

E. Containment starts at the mail truck. Cover your mail trays whenever you can, to help reduce the risk of individual exposure and widespread contamination

F. Practice your emergency response procedures frequently. There is no substitute for knowing what to do and whom to call for help

G. There is a wide range of suspicious substance identification kits now available. While they all generally work, we don't recommend using any of them in your mail center. Talk to your local first responders and see what they will use when they arrive

H. Remember that the USPS and FBI will want you to preserve any suspicious substance for forensic purposes

IV. What To Do If You Have Room In Your Budget

A. X-ray equipment is now widely available, technically sophisticated and reasonably priced

B. Updraft or downdraft sorting tables protect your employees and your facilities

C. HEPA filtration keeps mail dust and anthrax in your mailroom and out of the ventilation system

D. Invest in a negative pressure air room for your mail center to protect your facilities

E. Identify and equip an alternative mail center location for use when you do have an incident

V. Case Studies

A. A financial services company

B. A pharmaceutical company

C. An electronics manufacturer

VI. Useful Resources

A. *U.S. Postal Inspection Service Pub 166, Mail Center Security Guidelines*
http://www.usps.com/cpim/ftp/pubs/pub166.pdf

B. *General Services Administration*, "Mail Center Security Guide-Third Edition"
http://www.gsa.gov/gsa/cm_attachments/GSA_DOCUMENT/2004_Security_Guide_Final_R2RQ8-k_0Z5RDZ-i34K-pR.doc

C. *Mailing Systems Technology*, "Secure Your Mail Center"
http://www.pb.com/bv70/en_US/extranet/contentfiles/editorials/downloads/MST_Secure_Mail_Center%20_June_07.pdf

D. *Mail: The Journal Of Communication Distribution*, "Protecting Mail Center Operations In A Still Dangerous World"
http://www.pb.com/bv70/en_US/extranet/contentfiles/editorials/downloads/ProtectingMailOperations2.pdf