The InfoGram

White powder envelope sent to city council member contains fentanyl

Last week a Pennsylvania city council president was hospitalized after receiving a letter containing white powder. While lab tests have not yet been completed, officials believe the envelope contained fentanyl.

While most suspicious white powders sent through the mail turn out to be harmless, first responders must be prepared to handle a call that is for real. The anthrax letters of 2001 are usually the first thing many of us think of, but there are several cases involving other deadly substances. Ricin was sent to the white house in 2014 and again just last month.

It also seems anyone may be a target now, making this more of a concern for smaller towns and cities around the country. This week the Erie County New York Board of Education and a Massachusetts hospital received white powder envelopes; both were deemed non-hazardous. However, a Texas sheriff's office received four letters containing ricin from the same sender as the White House incident last month.

Your agency should consider doing the following two things:

- ❯ Review your response plans and procedures for a white powder incident. Make sure they address any type of possible substance, not just anthrax. Practice the plans and make changes as needed.

- ❯ Consider sending informational materials on handling white powder mail incident to any local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, private sector businesses or any other entities or individuals that may be targets. This could be most easily done through email or a public service announcement.

For workplace handling of suspicious mail, see the United States Postal Service's one-page poster/handout on identifying and handling suspicious mail.

For more information on the dangers of fentanyl, see this webpage from the Drug Enforcement Agency. See this Department of Justice guide and this webpage from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for concerns specific to first responders.

See the CDC for more information on symptoms of ricin exposure or the dangers of anthrax.

(Sources: Various)

Fire Adapted Communities can reduce firefighter fatalities and injuries

While facing the complexities of managing response to wildfire with pandemic guidelines, as well as the large amount of wildfires burning recently, there have been a number of firefighter fatalities and injuries this year.

Residents and communities can help emergency personnel respond more safely by completing wildfire safety projects where they live. A few weekends spent working to identify and mitigate wildfire risks to structures can save lives and property, and reduce the risks firefighters face as well.

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) outlines steps your community can take to

Highlights

White powder envelope sent to city council member contains fentanyl

Fire Adapted Communities can reduce firefighter fatalities and injuries

FEMA requests public feedback on NIMS EMS resources

Examining Housing and Shelter Systems in Disasters During COVID-19

Cyber Threats

U.S. Fire Administration

Subscribe here

achieve this goal. See the recent Fire-Adapted Communities Coffee Break Training for an overview, links to more resources and programs, and videos and stories about community successes.

(Source: USFA)

FEMA requests public feedback on NIMS EMS resources

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Integration Center is seeking public feedback on four National Incident Management System (NIMS) resource typing definitions. NIMS resource typing definitions define minimum qualifications and capabilities for personnel and equipment within assigned teams to manage all threats and hazards, regardless of the incident's cause or size.

FEMA requests comments on four job resource typing definitions under the emergency medical services core capability:

- ❯ Emergency Medical Responder.

- ❯ Emergency Medical Technician.

- ❯ Emergency Medical Technician – Advanced.

- ❯ Paramedic.

To provide comments on the draft, complete the feedback form and submit the form to fema-nims@fema.dhs.gov by 5:00 p.m. Eastern, October 15, 2020.

NIMS is a key component of incident management efforts, enabling organizations from across the country to work together during incidents of all kinds and sizes. Implementing NIMS is a fundamental part of building our national preparedness.

(Source: FEMA)

Examining Housing and Shelter Systems in Disasters During COVID-19

Sheltering during disasters took a turn this year as jurisdictions need to manage a pandemic on top of whatever may be going on. This requires a reexamination of current disaster housing plans and capacities.

Those tasked with managing these issues should be interested in the upcoming webinar Examining Housing and Sheltering Systems in Disasters During COVID-19. Join the webinar on Friday, October 9, 2020, at 2 p.m. Eastern to learn about emerging practices, preparedness, and the application of public health and safety standards in disaster shelter activations. Registration is required.

This interactive webinar will provide a forum for emergency management, homeland security and national disaster shelter by experts from the Department of Human Services, the American Red Cross, the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, and the Kansas Division of Emergency Management.

This webinar is part of the Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS) Housing and Shelter During a Pandemic webinar series, held in partnership with the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, CHDS Alumni Association, International Association of Emergency Managers and National Emergency Management Association.

To submit questions for this webinar in advance, please use the Questions & Comments section during registration or send an email to chds-eep@nps.edu.

(Source: CHDS)

Cyber Threats

FBI says hackers want to stoke doubt about the 2020 election

The FBI and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) released a warning on Monday alerting the public about the potential for widespread disinformation campaigns designed to cast doubt about the legitimacy of the coming elections in November.

The announcement says "foreign actors and cyber criminals" are trying to spread false claims of cyberattacks on United States voter registration databases or voting systems in an effort to "manipulate public opinion, discredit the electoral process, and undermine confidence in US democratic institutions."

(Source: TechRepublic)

National Cybersecurity Awareness Month: #BeCyberSmart

Now in its 17th year, National Cybersecurity Awareness Month continues to raise awareness about the importance of cybersecurity and ensure all Americans have the resources to be safer and secure online.

Every year, National Cybersecurity Awareness Month conveys a clear message of partnership between government and industry. CISA and the National Cyber Security Alliance are proud to announce this year's theme: "Do Your Part. #BeCyberSmart."

This theme encourages individuals and organizations to own their role in protecting cyberspace, stressing personal accountability and the importance of taking proactive steps to enhance cybersecurity. Weekly themes:

- ◈ Week of October 5, 2020: If You Connect it, Protect it.
- ◈ Week of October 12, 2020: Securing Devices at Home and Work.
- ◈ Week of October 19, 2020: Securing Internet-Connected Devices in Healthcare.
- ◈ Week of October 26, 2020: The Future of Connected Devices.

Partners are welcome to follow along with each weekly theme but also encouraged to create their own areas of focus relevant to their organization. CISA encourages you to use National Cybersecurity Awareness Month's hashtag #BeCyberSmart before, during and after October to promote your involvement in raising cybersecurity awareness.

(Source: CISA)

911 lines down in 14 states this week, technical cause unknown

Emergency services across at least 14 states have reported outages of their 911 lines on Monday. The outage impacted all emergency services simultaneously, and 911 services were restored within 30 and 60 minutes for most affected counties.

A clue of the source of the outage comes from the city of Redmond, Washington, home of tech giant Microsoft, which also reported a similar phone line outage and blamed the incident on "a larger Microsoft 365 outage."

Impacted counties reported losing connectivity for 911 phone and SMS services, but did not provide any technical details about the source of the outage.

(Source: zdnet)

Cyber Information and Incident Assistance Links

MS-ISAC
SOC@cisecurity.org
1-866-787-4722

IdentityTheft.gov

IC3

Cybercrime Support Network

General Information Links

FTC scam list

CISA alerts

Law Enforcement Cyber Center

TLP Information