

LETTER BOMBS

PUBLIC AWARENESS CHART 2

Supplementary technical data photographs and slide programmes available with this chart upon request.

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HOLES IN THE ENVELOPE

Letter bombs sometimes have holes through which a split pin or other safety device has been pulled out with a wire.

RIGID ENVELOPE

If an envelope has any feeling of springiness at the top, bottom or sides but it does not bend or flex, this is a sign of an explosive device.

BALANCE

Any letter should be treated as suspect if it is unbalanced, has loose contents, or is heavier on one side than the other.

RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS

Confidential, Personal or other restrictive markings might indicate a letter bomber trying to ensure that the package is opened only by a targeted individual.

INNER ENCLOSURES

If after opening a letter or package, an inner sealed enclosure is encountered it should be treated as suspect.

SUSPICIOUS PACKAGING

An envelope taped down all around, instead of having a normal opening flap may contain a booby trap spring Letters or packets with excessive securing material should be treated as suspect.

PROTRUDING WIRES OR TINFOIL

Letter bombs can be loosened or damaged in the post causing fuses or electrical wires to penetrate the wrapping or envelope.

POORLY-TYPED ADDRESSES

Typed addresses may lack the professional touch of a secretary or a person who types every day.

HANDWRITTEN ADDRESSES

Any mail should be treated with caution if it features a foreign-style of writing not normally received. This should be considered in relation to the postmark.

POSTMARK

Note the postmark. It may be from a country directing a terrorist campaign or an area where postal bombs are popularly associated.

Letter bombs can even be posted from within the Republic to allay suspicion.

EXCESSIVE POSTAGE

Excessive postage might indicate an anxious letter bomber wanting to ensure that the package goes through the post without delay or difficulty.

MIS-SPELLING OF COMMON WORDS

Do not assume, however, that addresses on letter bombs will be mis-spelt or crudely written - Terrorists come from all backgrounds, and some not only have cultured handwriting but are familiar with etiquette and forms of address

INCORRECT TITLES

GREASE MARKS, OILY STAINS OR DISCOLOURATION

Some explosives leave greasy black marks on paper or may sweat - a certain clue to a letter bomb. It may also mean that the explosive is old and unstable and very dangerous. The envelope may also have signs of more than usual fingering.

VISUAL DISTRACTIONS

Letter bombs, in the form of paperback books are quite common. The books often have an obscene or erotic picture on the cover to shock or distract the recipient.

OTHER UNUSUAL FEATURES

An envelope containing a bomb may have other unusual features, for example, if it is designed to explode when the contents are pulled out of the top, they may well have been inserted from the side and the side flap of the envelope may not look quite the same as when it was manufactured.

NO RETURN ADDRESS

No indication at all of the sender.

EXCESSIVE WEIGHT

If it seems excessively heavy for its size it should be treated as suspect.

SMELL

A smell of almonds or marzipan, or any strange smell, is a good clue to a suspect letter bomb.



WARNING: A letter or package should always be treated with suspicion even if only one of the clues noted is present. If one is received handle carefully, do not open, store in a secure place and report immediately to your nearest Police Station, and then inform your superiors.