Welcome to the Hazardous Materials Awareness Exercise. This book is filled with valuable information pertaining to the recognition of hazardous materials found in the mailstream – both mailable and non-mailable. It is designed to be both educational and easy to use, and we hope you find it useful in your daily activities.

Note: All photos used as examples in this book are of live mail found in Postal facilities.
The Postal Service™ is committed to providing a safe workplace for its employees and providing for the safety of the general public and transportation infrastructure through the responsible management of hazardous materials and non-mailable items in the mail.

The Aviation Mail Security and Hazardous Materials Group is responsible for developing, implementing, and maintaining policies and procedures for the acceptance and handling of hazardous materials throughout the Postal Service. The Hazardous Materials Program is designed to accomplish these objectives by:

- Raising employees’ and mailers’ awareness of hazardous material mailability requirements.
- Reducing the amount of non-mailable material entering the system through diligence at acceptance.
- Ensuring that mailable hazardous materials and non-mailable items in the mailstream are handled consistently and in a manner that minimizes risk.
- Ensuring that only items eligible for air transportation are transported by air.

Introduction

This Hazardous Materials Awareness Exercise is designed to provide Postal Service employees with valuable information presented in an easy to use format. Its primary focus is to increase Postal Employees’ knowledge and understanding of how to identify hazardous materials found in the mailstream so they can complete their responsibilities in a safe manner. This exercise includes photos and descriptions of actual mail pieces, both mailable and non-mailable, found in USPS facilities around the country and explains how they relate to current Postal Service policy and regulations pertaining to hazardous materials.

This exercise is part of the Hazardous Materials Awareness training that all USPS employees are required to complete. Instructors are required to use this exercise during training classes to enhance the learning process and to assist with discussions of hazardous materials procedures. Instructors should discuss each section of the exercise book with students in the classes using the photos and captions to assist them. Once training has been completed, this exercise should be made readily accessible to all employees for their continued use as a reference.
This section provides photos of various non-mailable items and brief descriptions explaining why they are considered non-mailable under Postal regulations.

Section 1

Non-Mailable Hazardous Materials
DOT-Labeled Boxes and Re-Used Boxes
DOT Hazardous Materials Labels

The US Department of Transportation (DOT) requires the use of specific labels to indicate that a parcel contains a hazardous material so it can be handled safely in transportation. **Diamond-shaped DOT labels** indicate that the item contains a regulated, or relatively large quantity of, a **hazardous material** that the Postal Service does not allow in most cases. With two exceptions (Class 6.2 and Class 9), any parcels bearing a diamond-shaped DOT hazard warning label are **non-mailable**. We must assume these items contain hazardous material(s) as indicated by the labels placed on the outer packaging. See USPS Poster 298 for more information.

If these items are found in the mailstream, they **must be removed** and taken to the facility’s **Hazardous Materials Staging Area** and recorded on **USPS Form 6813** as per **MI-DM-601-05-1**.

This parcel has multiple HAZMAT labels and markings. The presence of prohibited DOT diamond shaped labels makes this parcel non-mailable.

This parcel has a DOT Class 4 Flammable Solid label. This is an excellent example of how DOT labels typically appear. This parcel is not mailable.
The DOT Class 8 corrosive label on this container indicates the presence of a regulated quantity of corrosive material. This parcel is not mailable.

This preprinted DOT Class 1.4 label indicates the presence of explosives. This parcel is not mailable.

The DOT Class 2 label indicates the presence of a regulated quantity of non-flammable compressed gas. This parcel is not mailable.

The DOT Class 2 label on this parcel indicates the presence of a regulated quantity of flammable gas. This parcel is not mailable.
Re-Used Packaging

DMM 601.5.1b states that a container improperly identified by contents is non-mailable. Therefore, re-used packaging, boxes, and containers bearing inapplicable markings or labels associated with hazardous, prohibited, or restricted materials are prohibited in the mailstream unless these markings have been removed or completely obliterated. If these labels or markings can still be read or identified, they are not sufficiently obliterated.

Examples of commonly encountered reused boxes include liquor/wine/beer boxes, cosmetics boxes and cleaning supply boxes. The Postal Service must assume that all markings and labels on a package identify the actual contents. While most alcoholic beverages are not hazardous materials, alcoholic beverages are prohibited from the mail as specified in DMM 601.11.7. As such, all mailpieces containing alcoholic beverages and/or with alcoholic beverage markings are prohibited in the mail (see MI-DM-601-05-1).

Unacceptable Re-Used Box

Acceptable Re-Used Box

Important Customer Information

We regret that your mail is being returned to you because it bears alcoholic beverage (e.g., beer, wine, liquor) markings or labels. The Postal Service prohibits the mailing of alcoholic beverages (DMM 601.11.7). Postal employees must assume that markings and labels on mail indicate the actual contents. As such, all mail pieces containing alcoholic beverages and/or bearing alcoholic beverage markings are prohibited in the mail (DMM 601.5.1b).

To determine if you are eligible for a postage refund, take this mail piece with the notice attached to the retail window at a Post Office.

Prohibited item return label DECD4D4.
Re-Used Boxes

Typical re-used box. In order to be mailable, this label would have to be completely marked out.

Parcel bearing improperly obliterated ORM-D markings.

Preprinted markings indicating the presence of 6 gallons of bleach. Bleach is potentially mailable only if it is classified as ORM-D and meets the mailing standards in the DMM.

Improperly obliterated DOT Class 8 label. The label can still be read, so it is not sufficiently marked out.
This section provides photos of various potentially mailable items and brief descriptions explaining why they are considered potentially mailable under Postal regulations.

Potentially Mailable Items
ORM-D & ORM-D-Air, Infectious Substances, Sharps, and DOT Class 9 – Miscellaneous
ORM-D

ORM-D (Other Regulated Materials) is a limited quantity of a HAZMAT presenting a minimal hazard during transportation due to its form, quantity, and packaging. ORM-Ds are potentially mailable subject to USPS quantity and packaging standards. Not all HAZMATs are permitted to be shipped as ORM-D consumer commodity materials.

Materials classified as ORM-D consumer commodities are permitted on surface transportation only. ORM-D consumer commodity materials meeting the more stringent USPS standards for air transport may be classified as ORM-D-Air consumer commodity materials and are permitted to be transported by air with a completed shipper’s declaration.

Only ORM-D and ORM-D-Air consumer commodity materials meeting USPS quantity limitations and packaging requirements are mailable (DMM 601.10).

Example of a typical preprinted ORM-D marking. This parcel is potentially mailable if all requirements in DMM are met.

Example of properly accepted and ORM-D parcel with label 127 affixed. This parcel has been placed in a flat tub to protect it during transportation.

This ORM-D parcel is potentially mailable as parcel post but should not have been accepted as priority mail. In order to be acceptable as priority mail, it must be classified as ORM-D-Air and include a complete shipper’s declaration.
Infectious Substances – Hazard Class 6, Division 6.2

DOT Hazard Class 6, Division 6.2 is a broad and complex group consisting of infectious substances, biological products, cultures and stocks, diagnostic specimens, regulated medical waste, sharps waste, toxins, and used health care products. Division 6.2 materials are only permitted in domestic and international mail when intended for medical or veterinary use, research, or laboratory certification related to public health. Additionally, they must be packaged properly for mailing per DMM 601.10.17.

Example of an infectious substance parcel bearing a DOT 6.2 label. This parcel is potentially mailable if all DMM requirements are met.

Examples of typical clinical specimen parcels bearing biohazard labels.

Examples of clinical specimen parcels bearing biohazard labels.
Sharps

Sharps means any object contaminated with a pathogen or that may become contaminated with a pathogen through handling or during transportation and that is also capable of cutting or penetrating skin or packaging material (DMM 601.10.17). Examples include medical syringes, scalpels, and other sharp/cutting tools used in the practice of medicine.

Sharps waste may be permitted in the mail only using merchandise return service with First-Class Mail or Priority Mail and must include the following:

- **Authorization** – each distributor of sharps must obtain authorization from the USPS prior to mailing

- **Packaging** – sharps must be packaged in containers meeting the USPS definitions in DMM 601.10.17.2e and 601.10.17.2g

- **Labeling/marking** – each outer packaging must bear the following:
  - Company name of authorized party
  - USPS authorization number
  - Packaging material's certification number
  - International biohazard symbol
  - Completed sharps manifest

Examples of properly prepared sharps containers.
Miscellaneous Hazardous Materials – DOT Hazard Class 9

Miscellaneous hazardous materials, DOT Hazard Class 9, are substances or articles that present a hazard during transportation but do not meet the definition of any other hazard class (DMM 601.10.20).

Dry ice is the only regulated miscellaneous hazardous material allowed in the mailstream. Dry ice is permitted in the mailstream in the domestic mail via air or surface transportation when used as a refrigerant to cool the contents of the mailpiece. A mailpiece containing dry ice must be packaged and marked as follows:

- Must be packed in a container designed to permit the release of carbon dioxide gas
- Containers must conform to DOT container requirements
- Air transportation requirements:
  - Cannot contain more than 5 lbs of dry ice
  - Address side must be marked “Carbon Dioxide Solid, UN1845” or “Dry Ice, UN1845”
  - The net weight of the dry ice must be marked on the package
  - The identity of the contents being cooled must be marked on the package
  - Shipper’s declaration must be affixed
  - DOT Hazard Class 9 warning label must be affixed to outside of mailpiece
- Surface transportation requirements:
  - Amount of dry ice may exceed 5 lbs
  - Address side must be marked “Carbon Dioxide Solid” or “Dry Ice”

“Surface Only” or “Surface Mail Only” must be marked on the address side of the package

The net weight of the dry ice must be marked on the package

The identity of the contents being cooled must be marked on the package

Example of properly prepared DOT Class 9 mailpiece.
Section 3 People Will Mail Anything
Training Programs

- **Retail:**
  - HAZMAT Retail Acceptance Course (#54201-55).
  - HAZMAT Retail Acceptance Refresher Course (#54201-61).
- **Delivery:**
  - Delivery and Collection HAZMAT Training Module (#54293-01).
  - Delivery and Collection HAZMAT Refresher Course (#54210-62).
- **Processing Operations:**
- **Mail Recovery Centers:**
  - Mail Recovery Centers HAZMAT Operational Awareness (#51201-17).
- **Business Mail Entry:**
- **Business Service Networks/Sales:**
  - Business Service Networks/Sales Hazardous Materials Operational Awareness (#54294-00).

Support Materials

The following support materials have been developed to assist in implementation of Hazardous Materials Program policies and procedures:

- Notice 107, *Let’s Keep the Mail Safe.*
- Poster 37, *Let’s Keep the Mail Safe.*
- Poster 81, *Shipping a Reused Box?*
- Poster 128, *The Safety of the Mail is Everyone’s Responsibility.*
- Poster 138, *Keep the Mail Safe.*

Ordering information for these materials is available at [http://blue.usps.gov/nom/logistics/avsec/avsecwelcome.htm](http://blue.usps.gov/nom/logistics/avsec/avsecwelcome.htm).

Available Resources and Related Documents

- *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service (DMM).*
- *International Mail Manual (IMM).*
- Publication 52, *Hazardous, Restricted, and Perishable Mail.*

Each of these documents is available on the Postal Service PolicyNet Web site:

- Under “Essential Links” in the left-hand column, click on “References.”
- Under “References” in the right-hand column, under “Policies,” click on “PolicyNet.”
