

# Hazardous Materials Awareness Exercise



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.

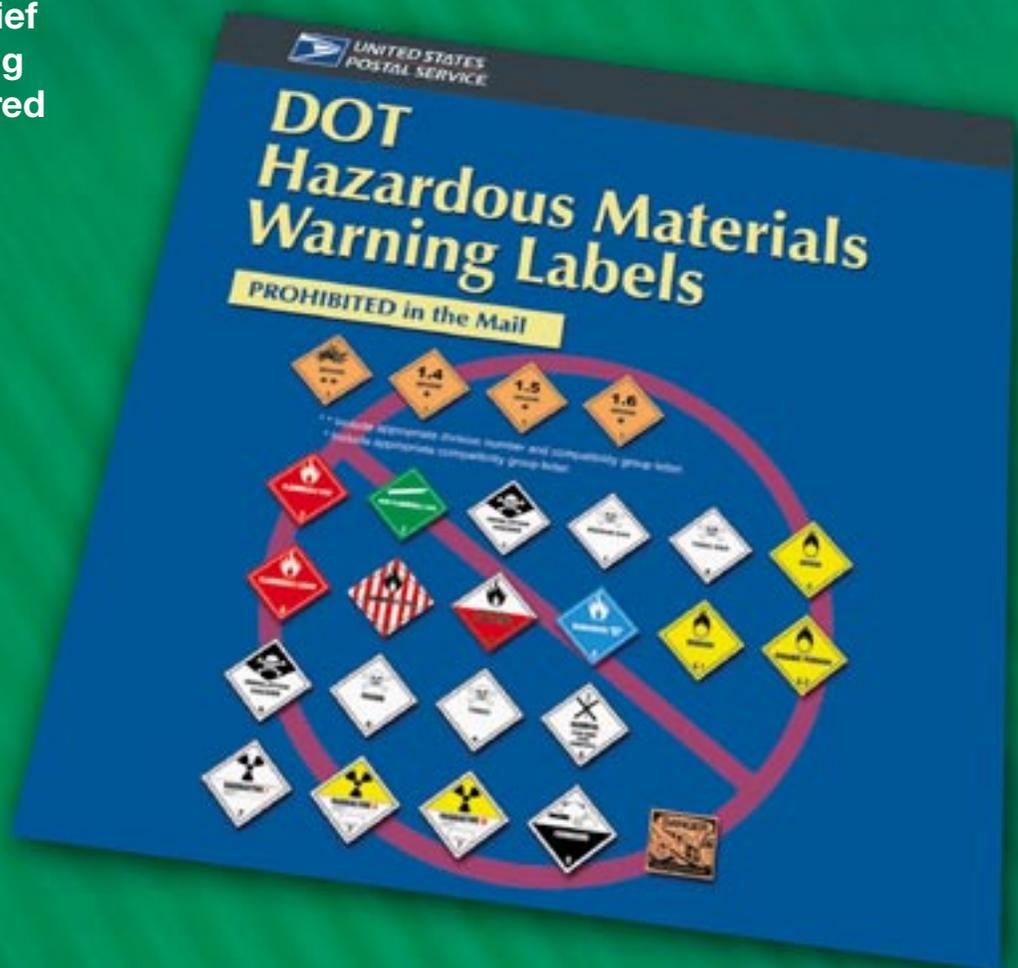
*This Hazardous Materials Awareness Exercise is designed to provide Postal Service employees with valuable information presented in an easy to use format. Its primary focus is to increase Postal Employees' knowledge and understanding of how to identify hazardous materials found in the mailstream so they 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.*

# Introduction



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*).



This photo shows typical examples of non-mailable re-used boxes that were accepted into the mailstream and discovered at a downstream location.

### 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.

DECDDD4 July 05

PSN: 7690-08-000-1490

Prohibited item return label DECDDD4.



**Unacceptable Re-Used Box**



**Acceptable Re-Used Box**



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



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.

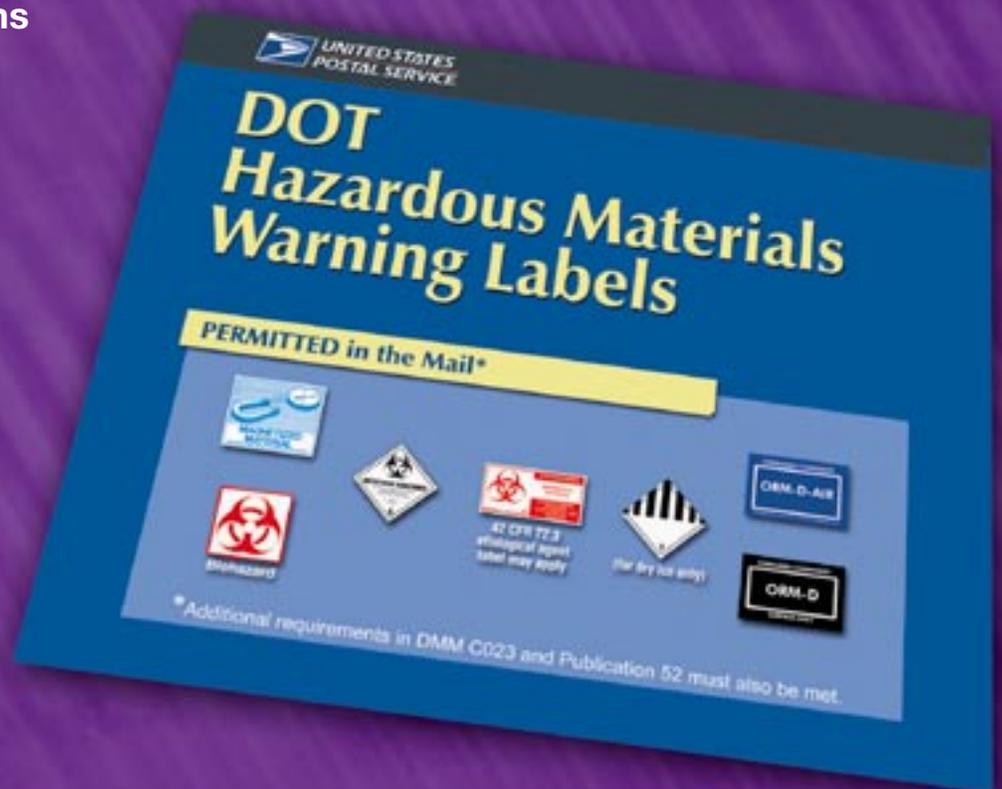


Parcel bearing improperly obliterated ORM-D markings.



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.



## Section 2

### 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 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.



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

## 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**.



Examples of typical clinical specimen parcels bearing biohazard labels.



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 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/markings** – 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.



Example of properly prepared DOT Class 9 mailpiece.



Just another harmless looking box.



But inside – a 4-foot alligator that chewed his way out of the box during processing.



Just another box.



But inside – a monitor lizard.



Bayonet that punctured box during processing.



Generator that was shipped full of gasoline. The gasoline leaked out during processing.

# 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:**
  - » Hazardous Materials Handling for Mail Processing Train-the-Trainer (#54201-99).
  - » Hazardous Materials Handling for Mail Processing (#54201-54).
- **Mail Recovery Centers:**
  - » Mail Recovery Centers HAZMAT Operational Awareness (#51201-17).
- **Business Mail Entry:**
  - » Business Mail Entry Hazardous Materials Procedural Instructions (#54294-05).
- **Business Service Networks/Sales:**
  - » Business Service Networks/Sales Hazardous Materials Operational Awareness (#54294-00).

For current training materials and course schedules, go to the Aviation Mail Security and Hazardous Materials Web site at <http://blue.usps.gov/nom/logistics/avsec/avsecwelcome.htm>.

## 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*.
- Poster 298, *DOT Hazardous Materials Labels*.

Ordering information for these materials is available at <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)*.
- Management Instruction DM601-05-1, *Hazardous Materials Acceptance and Handling*.
- Publication 52, *Hazardous, Restricted, and Perishable Mail*.
- Handbook DM-109, *Business Mail Acceptance*.

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

- Go to <http://blue.usps.gov>.
- Under "Essential Links" in the left-hand column, click on "References."
- Under "References" in the right-hand column, under "Policies," click on "PolicyNet."

