



Small Chemical Bomb Awareness Bulletin



Areas of Fairfax County, including the Great Falls area, are experiencing a rash of chemical bombs placed in mailboxes. Chemical bombs include several components which when mixed together and sealed in a plastic bottle create a reaction that releases gas. The gas causes the plastic bottle to swell until it explodes. The explosions are powerful enough to damage mailboxes and cause potentially serious harm to persons.

Be Alert!

Be aware of unusual activity in your neighborhood, such as strange vehicles or persons stopping at mailboxes or vehicles or persons stopping at mailboxes late at night.

Write down descriptions of vehicles or persons acting unusually near mailboxes, including the make/model & license tags of vehicles and the age, gender, and general description of persons in the vehicle or on foot near mailboxes.

Report any suspicious activity to the Fairfax County Police non emergency number, 703-691-2131.

What to look for:

- Plastic bottles placed inside in mailboxes or in other unusual locations
- Plastic fragments, aluminum fragments, or oily liquid residue in or on a mailbox
- Items of mail soaked with oily liquid residue
- Leaks, stains, or damage to mailboxes or materials protruding from mailboxes
- Hissing, vibration, or other unusual sound emanating from mailbox or plastic bottle
- Chemical, acidic, or other unusual odors in or around mailboxes

If you see something that could be a bomb:

Leave the bottle or substance where it was found. Do not disturb bottles as they may explode when handled.

Do not try to clean up the substance or remove broken bottles.

Clear the immediate area of all persons and keep others away. Chemical bombs often contain corrosive materials which could be harmful.

Immediately dial 9-11 to request fire/rescue and police assistance.

Fire Investigators ask that anyone with information regarding chemical bombs please contact the Fire Investigations Branch at 703-246-4386.



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This document is available in an alternative format upon request. Please call the Fairfax County Police Department at 703-246-7562. TTY 703-204-2264. Allow seven working days for preparation of the material.