



Mail screening matters: 2013 Derry letter bomb

In October 2013, Royal Mail was responsible for intercepting a letter bomb sent to an office in Northern Ireland. The delivery company, which was praised for its intervention, is known for its rigorous procedures in dealing with suspicious packages, which include training and briefing its staff to understand how to respond to suspicious mail.

It is important for organisations to have a clear response procedure to postal threats – and that’s why the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) has launched a campaign to highlight the importance of mail security. With the right staff training and awareness, the risk of postal threats can be reduced within an organisation. Here, we look back at the successful intervention.

A letter bomb was delivered to the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) office in the waterside area of Londonderry, Northern Ireland in October 2013. The package was considered suspicious because it was in a white A4 envelope with stencilled grey writing. The postman who handled it thought the package looked unusual, and responded by immediately alerting security.

The device was declared a viable threat by army bomb disposal officers and taken away from the area.

At the time, Justice Minister David Ford praised Royal Mail for its vigilance. He said: “Royal Mail has been very active in putting in place security measures to detect and deal with suspicious packages, which in turn helps to secure and protect our citizens.

“I was grateful for the opportunity to personally thank some of the staff involved in dealing with our mail and carrying out those security checks.

“There is an obvious threat to these staff when reckless people abuse the mail system and I commend them for their vigilance.”

CPNI encourage organisations to consider their own mail screening and security practices. CPNI’s “Mail Screening Matters” campaign provides tools and resources to increase awareness around postal security and help reduce the risk and impact of suspicious mail. Search for more information on mail screening and security at www.cpni.gov.uk