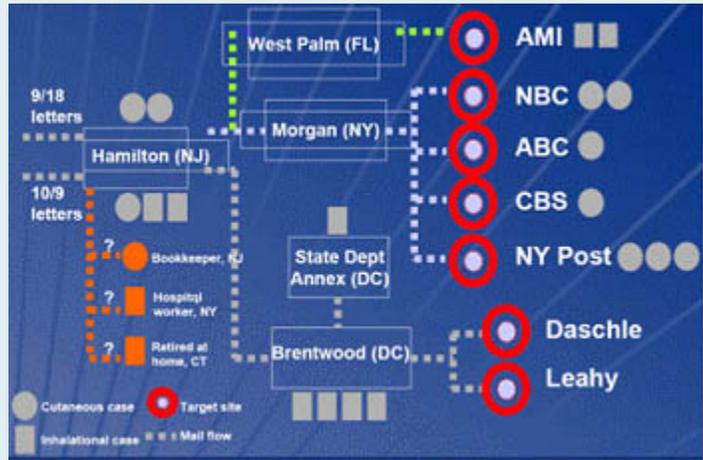


US ANTHRAX ATTACKS

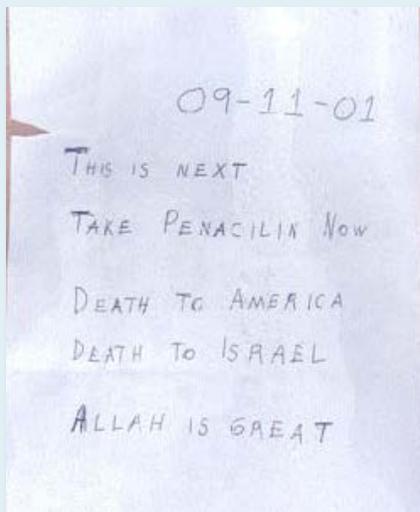
Situation: Letters containing anthrax mailed to several U.S. locations.

On 30 September 2001, an employee of the supermarket tabloid, The Sun, began feeling ill. Bob Stevens worked in Boca Raton, Florida as a photo editor for the tabloid published by America Media Inc. (AMI). Over the next two days, Stevens' condition deteriorated and on 2 October he was admitted to the hospital with a fever of 102 degrees, nausea, and confusion. The next day, doctors determined that Stevens had anthrax and placed him on a respirator and intravenous penicillin. Two days later, on 5 October, Stevens became the first recorded death due to inhalation anthrax in the United States since 1976 and the first of five to die in the 2001 anthrax attacks.



In total, as many as seven letters containing anthrax were mailed to addresses in New York and Washington DC from 18 September to 9 October 2001. In addition to the five killed, 17 others displayed symptoms of exposure to the deadly substance.

The anthrax attacks demonstrate the ability of terrorists to access and use biological agents. They also suggest that domestic terrorist groups and US citizens may carry out terrorist attacks against government facilities and iconic symbols.



It appears that the anthrax attacks were carried out in two phases. The first letters were mailed on 18 September, one week after the Al Qaeda attacks on New York and Washington. The letters were mailed from Trenton, New Jersey and apparently targeted major media organizations. Only two letters mailed on 18 September were recovered, one sent to NBC News and another to the New York Post. However, the pattern of anthrax infections in other areas suggests that letters were also mailed to ABC News, CBS News and AMI. Fortunately, the anthrax was relatively low grade, with the exception of that which took the life of Bob Stevens at AMI in Florida. Higher-grade anthrax could have caused many more deaths.

The second group of letters targeted two Senators in Washington D.C. – Tom Daschle and Patrick Leahy. Also bearing the Trenton, New Jersey postmark, these letters were mailed on 9 October, three weeks after the original letters sent to the media organizations. The anthrax used in these letters was much more potent than that used in the first attacks. Because anthrax had been identified in the previous mailings, victims in the Washington, DC attacks were immediately treated with antibiotics.

Be aware of terrorist tactics, techniques, and procedures used in your area. Knowledge of prior attacks can help you identify a threat early and maximize your chances of survival.

Symptoms caused by biological agents are difficult to diagnose because they can resemble other medical conditions. Stevens was properly diagnosed two weeks after the letter carrying anthrax was mailed. The first known indications of an attack occurred on 22 September when a page opening letters at the New York Post noticed a blister on her finger. Soon afterwards, several postal workers, employees of prominent news agencies, and their families also began showing symptoms.



There are three forms of anthrax exposure or infection: inhalation (air), cutaneous (skin), and gastrointestinal (eating).

Inhalation Anthrax: Initially, persons infected by anthrax through inhalation may display symptoms resembling the common cold such as fever. Over time, the symptoms can worsen to include breathing difficulties and shock. Victims exposed to the finer, higher-grade anthrax in Washington and Florida were infected in this manner.

Cutaneous Anthrax: Infections through the skin or cuts is the most common form of anthrax infection. Persons suffering from cutaneous anthrax usually display small itchy bumps resembling insect bites. Over time, these bumps can develop into larger ulcers or lesions. Generally, persons exposed to the lower-grade, coarser anthrax found in New York were infected in this manner.

Gastrointestinal Anthrax: Persons can also become infected with anthrax by eating meat or other contaminated products. Symptoms of this type of infection include abdominal pain, vomiting of blood, and severe diarrhea. There were no cases of this type of infection during the 2001 anthrax attacks in the United States.



The cost and impact of these attacks were enormous. At least trace contamination was found in dozens of buildings, including the Hart Senate Office Building and post offices that processed the letters. Cleanup of the contaminated buildings cost over \$1 billion and one building, a post office in Hamilton, New Jersey, did not

re-open for more than three and a half years. In all, the anthrax attacks killed five people and another seventeen were infected but survived. Thousands of individuals who were possibly exposed were placed on Cipro, an antibiotic used to treat anthrax infection. Hoaxes are another disturbing consequence. Since the attacks, hundreds of anthrax hoaxes have been reported in which mysterious white powders were found in government offices, media facilities, and addressed to celebrities.

From 2001 to 2008, the FBI interviewed more than 9,000 people, conducted more than sixty searches, and issued more than 6,000 subpoenas in an attempt to identify the perpetrator of the attacks. During the course of its investigation, the FBI identified multiple possible suspects; however, to this date, no one has been convicted in a court of law for the US anthrax attacks.

If you come into contact with a suspicious substance, you should attempt to quarantine the substance in an airtight container and warn others to stay away. Preserve any evidence, such as envelopes or packaging, and wash your skin thoroughly with soap and water if you came in contact. Most importantly, seek medical attention immediately.