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Characteristics of Suspicious and Potentially Hazardous Letters and Packages

The under listed are common indicators of potentially dangerous postal articles.

- No return address.
- Misspellings.
- Incorrect title or missing name.
- Items labelled "Personal".
- Lopsided envelope.
- Letters that, are taped closed.
- Excessive tape on packages.
- Package or envelope that's heavy for its size.
- Too much postage (stamps).
- Stains, discolouration, odour, or crystallized substance on the outside.
- Leaking powder.

How to Handle Suspicious Mail

- Do not open it.
- Don't taste, smell, or touch substances leaking from it.
- Don't shake it.
- Isolate it.
- If you suspect a bomb, biological, radiological or chemical hazard, evacuate the building.
- Contact law enforcement authorities.
- Contact postal inspectors.

If you've opened mail and powder or suspicious substance has spilled out

- Cover the postal article.
- Exit/get out of room.
- Prevent access to room by others.
- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Make a list of anyone who might have come in contact with the substance.
- Remove contaminated clothing as soon as possible and put in sealed container.
- Shower as soon as possible.

5. Prepare your documentation

Where a postal article is to be sent to an international destination, proper labels must be applied. The documentation must be appropriate and complete and may have to accompany the item.

6. Pay for your item

To benefit from communication services offered by a postal/ courier operator, a consumer is required to pay for the item based on the terms and conditions of service or service level agreement between the consumer and postal/ courier operator.

Under section 62 of the Kenyan Information Communication Act, 1998 (CAP 411A), a postal/ courier operator may, without prejudice to any other method of recovery, withhold a postal article from the intended recipient of the postal article, until such postage or other sum is paid by either the sender or intended recipient of the article.

7. Deposit your item

Once your item is ready to be shipped you can deposit your item with your preferred postal/courier operator.

Compensation of Lost or Damaged Postal Articles

It is important for consumers to demand information on the postal/courier service provider's policy on the loss of or damage to postal articles. These policies are sometimes referenced in the terms of terms of service and/or service level agreement offered by postal/ courier service providers.

In the case of insured items, section 13 of the postal/ courier Regulations require postal/ courier operators to provide compensation up to the market value of the postal article sent by the consumer, even in the event that the item has been insured in excess of the market value.

A postal/ courier service provider is not required to pay compensation in cases where:

- A prohibited item has been sent via the Posta/ courier system.
- A customer did not honestly disclose the contents of the postal article
- The recipient of the postal article did not raise any objection at the point of receipt of the postal item
- The documentation that would assist in verifying the content of the postal article are not presented to the postal courier service provider.
- A postal article has been tampered with

Safe Mail handling Practices (Handling Hazardous and Suspicious Mail)

Although organizations and individuals may not necessarily receive mail that may contain prohibited items, including explosives, biologically or chemically hazardous substances there is a need to be cautious when receiving postal articles to ensure that they do not cause injury or harm to people or damage property. Therefore, every business needs to keep a watchful eye for suspicious mail.

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Disclaimer: While every effort has been made to ensure that the information included in this document is accurate, it is intended ONLY as a guideline towards providing information that would enable consumers make better decisions in the use and purchase of mobile/internet services and should not be regarded as (or used in lieu of) legal advice.

The Communications Authority of Kenya (CA) will not therefore accept any liability for the consequences of the actions taken or decisions made upon the information offered.

Acknowledgements: This brochure was developed as part of the Consumer Education Outreach Programme of the Communications Authority of Kenya.

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SAFE HANDLING OF POSTAL ARTICLES



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Introduction

The information provided here will enable consumers to ensure that their postal articles reach the intended destinations safe and secure.

Definition of a postal article

A postal article is any item or thing that is transmissible by post and has been presented for transmission through a postal/courier system. Postal articles include, but are not limited to letters, aerogrammes, postcards and parcels but exclude anything the Authority has determined as not to be transmissible by post.

Proper packaging of postal articles

Proper preparation before sending an item in the mail can help ensure that it arrives safely, securely and according to the service selected. Preparing an item for shipment, postage and delivery by courier includes everything from packaging and addressing to depositing the item in a mailbox. This information will help you get items to their planned destinations safely, securely and economically. The Authority has also prepared some tips on how to appropriately package your postal articles. This information is available through the 'consumers' link at www.ca.go.ke

Handling of postal articles

The steps detailed in the following paragraphs will help ensure that your postal articles reach their destination safely.

1. Ensure your item is acceptable for mailing

Consumers are responsible for ensuring that their postal article(s) are acceptable for mailing as required under the law. Under section 71 of the Kenya Information and Communications Act, CAP 411A, sending offensive material by post is an offence. Under section 57 and 58 the materials that may not be sent by post include:

- a. Pornographic materials.
- b. Any indecent or obscene printing, photograph, lithograph, engraving, book or card or any other indecent or obscene article.
- c. Any postal article having thereon, or on the cover thereof, any words or designs of an indecent, obscene, scurrilous, threatening or grossly offensive character.
- d. Any postal article bearing any fictitious stamp or purporting to be prepaid with any postage stamp which has previously been used in payment of any stamp duty.
- e. Any material that may be injurious to persons.
- f. Any explosive, inflammable, dangerous, filthy, noxious, deleterious substance or any sharp instrument not properly protected which is likely to injure any person or any postal article in the course of transmission by post, unless exempted by provisions under the Kenya Information and Communications (postal and couriers services) Regulations, 2010.
- g. Betting advertisements relating to illegal businesses.
- h. Fortune telling advertisements.
- i. Sweepstake/lottery tickets or advertisements and other notices in relation to sweepstakes or lotteries that are unlawful.
- j. Money-lender circulars that are enclosed.
- k. Any postal article infringing on trademark or copyright laws.
- l. Any living creature, other than bees, leeches, silkworms, parasites or destroyers of noxious insect and animal trophies.

Exceptional postal articles

The law does, however, permit the sending of certain postal articles via postal and courier systems under special circumstances. These articles include:

- Docking facilities/ equipment for large vehicles are not available.
- Creating a premium image is important.

3. Identify your specific postal/courier needs:

Before contacting any postal/courier companies, it is best to formulate a clear understanding in your own mind of what specific capabilities you require from the service provider you will use such as:



Postal Article	Qualification for acceptance
Dangerous drugs	This item can ONLY be sent by an insured box or by insured parcel post strictly for medical or scientific purposes to countries that admit them when sent for those purposes.
Live bees, leeches, silkworms, parasites or destroyers of noxious insects used for the purposes of controlling those insects.	These items can ONLY be sent by letter post and if addressed to officially recognized institutions.
Any postal article enclosed in an envelope with an open panel.	These items can only be sent by the inland service.
Paper money not crossed for payment solely through Post Bank.	This item can ONLY be sent by the inland service, registered letters or registered parcel post for transmission by the international service or by registered letter post, insured letter post, or insured parcel post.
Jewellery and other valuables.	These items can ONLY be sent by registered letter post of insured- parcel or an insured box.
Any postal article bearing the word "registered" or any other phrase to that effect and any article which by these regulations is required to be registered or subject to the provisions of these regulations and is of a monetary value.	This item can ONLY be sent by registered post.
Deleterious liquids, perishable biological substances or other similar substances.	These items can ONLY be sent by letter post at the letter rate of postage, strictly for medical examination or analysis, to a recognized medical practitioner or qualified veterinary surgeon.
Inflammable liquids.	Only a maximum amount of one litre can be sent and MUST have a flash point of 320 C or above but lower than 650 C.
Radiative liquids.	These items can ONLY be sent in small quantities suitably packed, provided that when made up for the post radiation measured at the outside surface of a package does not exceed 10 milliroentgens per 24 hours by letter post at the letter rate of postage.
Any article liable to customs duty.	This item can ONLY be sent to countries that permit by law or regulations, the importation of such articles by post and by registered post if the law or regulations of the country or place of destination so requires.
Advertisements and publications relating to the treatment of general diseases or to any preparations for its prevention, care or relief.	These items can ONLY be sent if addressed to a qualified medical practitioner or chemist.



2. Package your item

The packaging of items depends on the type of postal article being sent via the postal or courier service. The customer is responsible for ensuring that a postal article is securely wrapped with sufficient cushioning and reinforcing the material, as necessary, to prevent loss of or damage to the item, damage to postal equipment/facilities or other mail and injury to persons handling the item. For example, fragile, crushable, oddly shaped, sharp, cutting, liquid, liquefiable or powdery articles require special precautions. You may want to find out if appropriate packaging materials are available for purchase from your preferred postal/courier operator.

Consumers sending parcels overseas are required by law to declare the contents of the postal article/package since all postal articles require customs clearance upon arrival in other countries/jurisdictions. This may require the sender to package their postal articles in the presence of the postal/courier operator to enable them to verify that the items being packaged are as claimed.

NOTE: We recommend that consumers refrain from using packaging that has previously been used to mail others goods unless they are re-wrapped in a way that ensures that previous address information is hidden from view.

3. Addressing of postal articles

It is very important to ensure that you properly address your envelope/ parcel to help postal/ courier service providers to deliver your mail to the right place efficiently. A detailed description of how to address your item/ postal article can be obtained from the appropriate fact sheet, which can be downloaded from the commission's website at www.ca.go.ke

4. Weighing and measuring your item

Most service providers determine the cost of shipping a postal article based on size, weight and destination of the article. Rectangular or square parcels and bundles of newspapers, magazines or catalogues are measured by determining length, width, height, as applicable. Volumetric weight is charged when items of any shape are large in size and light in weight. The shipping price is based on the greater of the volumetric weight or the actual weight.