

Timothy Kerner

CEO, The Millennium Group

How Safe Is Your Mail?

Most organizations have taken their eye off the mail-threat condition in the marketplace. Given the costs of both threats and hoaxes, companies need to ask whether they can afford not to screen mail and packages.

26

Ask yourself these questions: “How would my firm fare if our facility was closed due to a contaminated package or letter? Even a hoax letter shuts down a facility for hours; how can I minimize this risk?”

Over the past ten years, firms have realized the urgency for prudent mail-screening procedures as the business climate takes on a global reach with ordinary correspondence. The post 9/11 mail centers have changed their environment to departments with security control measures, migrating away from the production approaches of simple sort and delivery. While firms vary with control measures, one thing is certain: most organizations have taken steps towards enhancing mail screening.

The question remains, How far should we go and for how long? We hear the paradigm of “It’s not in my budget” or “I can’t get an X-Ray machine approved.” This roadblock is obstructing mail safety from a fiscal perspective and not a protection perspective. Organizations are not recognizing the critical losses related to building and infrastructure challenges associated with a mail threat. Recent terrorist threats specific to the financial community have elevated the

concern in and around the New York business community, specifically Wall Street. Organizations have reacted with screening protocols ranging from simple x-raying through off-site detection services. However, most organizations have taken their eye off the mail-threat condition in the marketplace.

“Since 2010, there have been 34,000 mail-related bomb threats globally and over 70,000 suspicious packages containing powder. The costs associated with threats are staggering.”

If there is a screening program in place, the threat of cross contamination of mail and parcels due to commingling delivery is typically ignored. This oversight creates a breach in the screening process, thus making it a flawed program with little to no value for employee

or infrastructure protection. This oversight could allow a hoax to penetrate your operation and lead to temporary closure of your facility, while leaving the competition unscathed.

The Costs Of Mail Threats

Since 2010, there have been 34,000 mail-related bomb threats globally and over 70,000 suspicious packages containing powder. Of these threats, over 100 deaths and many more injuries have been related to mail/parcel contents.

The costs associated with threats, whether legitimate or bogus, are staggering. The original US estimate for cleaning the DC Brentwood facility was revised from \$130 million to a cost of over \$160 million. The national average cost to respond to a bogus white-powder or bomb threat is \$54,000, without even considering lost productivity. With this startling cost the issue becomes whether any significant industry can really afford not to screen mail and packages.

Notable white-powder hoax letter targets have included the British, French, Austrian, Uzbekistan, and German Consulates in NY, federal court houses, public schools, banks, major corporations, military bases, federal, state, and local, political officials, religious organizations in-

cluding the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, news organizations, and even Dancing with the Stars.

To assist the New York metro business community with mail and parcel threat protection, The Millennium Group and SoBran Inc. established a joint venture to counter mail-borne threats and offer greater threat detection. SafeMail New York is a revolutionary screening service that protects businesses from mail terrorism. Strategically lo-

cated outside New York City, SafeMail New York will launch the first mail cleaning facility of its kind, offering full screening of mail and parcels for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive (CBRNE) threats.

A single hoax letter can cripple operations for hours, a real attack for days. An effective mail screening process will protect with minimal disruption. Our cutting-edge mail security services and the

How Safe Is Your Mail?

latest CBRNE detection equipment provide our clients with unattainable turnaround times. Our state-of-the-art facility will house protection equipment to include X-Ray explosive and detection, a biohazard rapid-detection unit sensing for anthrax, plague, tularemia, ricin, and small pox; negative pressure exhaust surface tables, and portable chemical detection units. A letter can receive complete CBRNE screening within 90 minutes.

The business case for a screening application begins with understanding the losses that could occur if a suspicious letter penetrates your facility. As mail service professionals, we need to continue to look beyond the budget challenges and identify the risk associated with a lack of mail-screening services. The true impact to a firm can be a crippling reputation that can cascade through the competitive community. Integrating a solution such as SafeMail New York will offer organizations the same critical review standards that have been tested, approved, and implemented by the federal government.

When analyzing from a total risk assessment, the decision for package screening discipline is prudent. Now is the time to consider your mail entry strategy for 2012 and heighten the protection for your organization.

To learn more about the Millennium Group, call 888-703-7030.



As president of The Millennium Group, **Timothy P. Kerner** has taken a modest mail distribution company and developed it into a nationally and globally recognized leader in Document and Facilities management services. Mr. Kerner is also a respected office services industry veteran.