



NJOHSP *at a glance*

YOUR WEEK IN REVIEW | October 11, 2016

Union County: Roselle Park Residents Receive Envelopes With Suspicious White Powder

Fourteen residences on one block in Roselle Park received envelopes containing suspicious white powder on October 7. (Photo shows emergency response.) Preliminary testing determined that there was no health hazard, and the powder consisted of a bleach-like substance, with other ingredients mixed in. All 14 envelopes were sent through the Elizabeth post office. In each case, the address, in type, was simply to “Resident,” and each had a fraudulent return address of “Roselle Park Police.” Two additional similar envelopes were held at the Elizabeth post office because the addresses did not exist. Roselle Park Police Chief Paul Morrison would not confirm or deny whether a note was included, citing the ongoing investigation. Speaking to reporters, Chief Morrison said the motive remains under investigation. In response to a question, he said at this early stage of the investigation, there is no evidence that any individual resident along that street was specifically targeted. He said that the incident is reminiscent of the anthrax attacks in 2001, and noting that there are “many things going on right now,” he stated that the white-powder mailings are being taken very seriously. Chief Morrison advised any other Roselle Park residents receiving similar envelopes to not open them, but call the police immediately.



Bergen County: After-Action Report Notes Problems With Massive Response at Paramus Mall

A training conference last week hosted by the Bergen County Office of Emergency Management featured an after-action review of the shooting incident at the Garden State Plaza in Paramus on November 4, 2013, in which a 20-year-old man fired multiple shots before taking his own life. According to press reports on the session, Steven Mehl, the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for Paramus, praised law enforcement officers for responding rapidly and clearing the massive mall, but offered a blunt assessment of lessons learned and changes that have been made in response to them. One of the key themes was that the massive response of law enforcement officers complicated efforts to manage the chaotic scene. Mehl said that initially, a call went out over the radio network for any towns with available units to send them to Garden State Plaza. The result was hundreds of emergency vehicles parked haphazardly, creating congestion that prevented some needed equipment from getting to the mall (see photo).



Mehl said that under the new response plan, a specific group of emergency personnel will receive a call, and only that group will respond. Each group will respond to a defined area and be assigned a specific task and commander.

Mehl also said that some shoppers saw the shooter take the gun out of his car, but none of them called 911. It was only after the shooting began that people called.

Other concerns included disorganization, the lack of a plan beyond the first few hours of the incident, a lack of accountability during the operation, and a lack of good maps and floor plans of the mall.

Europe: Suspect Charged With Terror-Related Offenses After Stabbing Police Officers

A Belgian national has been charged with terror-related offenses in connection with a stabbing attack that wounded two police officers in Brussels on October 5, according to a statement from the Belgian federal prosecutor’s office. The defendant, identified only as Hicham D., age 43, allegedly attacked the two officers on the street at noon, before being subdued and shot in the leg by another police patrol. During the apprehension, a third police officer was slightly injured. Hicham D. was charged with attempted murder in a terrorist context and participating in the activities of a terrorist group. The defendant’s brother, Aboubaker D., has also been detained.

Contact Information

Any agency with information or comments/questions on this or other analytical products, please contact the NJOHSP Analysis Bureau at analysis@njohsp.gov or 609-584-4000.

TO REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY, CALL 1-866-4-SAFE-NJ