Mail and Personal Safety

Category: OPERATING POLICIES
Issued: December 13, 2013
Responsible Office: Employment and HR Client Services
Contacts: Columbia University Public Safety Morningside – 212-854-5555; Columbia University Medical Center Public Safety – 212-365-7979; Columbia University Human Resources Morningside – 212-851-7008; Columbia University Medical Center Human Resources – Chief Human Resources Officer, (212) 305-9789

Policy Statement
Columbia University is committed to ensuring the safety of all members of the University community and maintaining the safety and security of our mail services. While no large organization is immune from safety concerns, clear policies and procedures help reduce the likelihood of safety concerns and guide appropriate responses to situations that may arise.

Reason(s) for the Policy
The purpose of this policy is to reiterate expectations for University employees regarding the use of Columbia University Mail Services and to set forth procedures to follow in response to suspicious mail.

Who is Governed by This Policy

This policy applies to all employees of the University including faculty, all staff, temporary employees, and student employees (with respect to conduct that pertains to their employment status). In addition, the policy applies to individuals whom the University contracts to do work on its behalf, including consultants, vendors, contractors, and sub-contractors. This policy covers activity at all University-owned and operated properties, facilities, and off-campus locations where University business is conducted through Columbia University Mail Services.

Who Should Know This Policy

All Columbia University employees and all University consultants, vendors, contractors, and sub-contractors who utilize Columbia University Mail Services should review and understand this policy.

Exclusions & Special Situations

None

Policy Text

Columbia University Mail Services provides the University community with mail services for sending, receiving, and processing domestic, international, and interoffice mail. University employees are expected to use our mail services for legitimate business and educational purposes. While we understand that our employees may need to use our mail services from time to time for
personal matters at their personal expense, certain uses of Columbia University Mail Services are prohibited. Our mail services must never be used by any employee or any University consultant, vendor, contractor, or subcontractor in violation of our Workplace Violence policy, our University Policy on Possession of Firearms on Campus, or any other applicable University policy.

The safety of our community is critically important. If a student or employee receives a suspicious package or envelope through Columbia University Mail Services, the mail item should not be opened and the Department of Public Safety must be notified immediately. Some signs of suspicious mail include: evidence of powder or unusual substances; odd odor; protruding wires; lopsided or uneven appearance; excessive postage or tape; and unexpected markings, such as “Do Not X-Ray.” To learn more about mail security and suspicious mail, please visit: [http://about.usps.com/securing-the-mail/mail-security-center.htm](http://about.usps.com/securing-the-mail/mail-security-center.htm).

All members of the Columbia community should report suspicious mail items and other safety concerns regarding mail services to the Department of Public Safety:

- Morningside:
  - On campus – 4-5555
  - Off campus – 212-854-5555
- Medical Center:
  - On campus – 5-7979
  - Off campus – 212-305-7979

If there is an immediate risk, call 911.

Cross References to Related Policies

- Workplace Violence:
  [http://hr.columbia.edu/policies/hr-manual/operating-policies](http://hr.columbia.edu/policies/hr-manual/operating-policies)
- University Policy on Possession of Firearms on Campus:
  [http://www.essential-policies.columbia.edu/university-regulations](http://www.essential-policies.columbia.edu/university-regulations)