

February 28, 2002

VICE PRESIDENTS, AREA OPERATIONS
MANAGER, CAPITAL METRO OPERATIONS
DISTRICT MANAGERS
PLANT MANAGERS

SUBJECT: Personnel Cooling Fans

Since late October, fans used for cooling personnel have been turned off to prevent the possible aerosolization and spread of anthrax spores. The decision was made to assure we did everything possible to prevent further employee illnesses. Now that new cleaning equipment and procedures are in place we need to reevaluate the fan policy. Additionally, warm weather is approaching and we must consider the potential for heat-related illness among our employees. This letter delineates the current policy on the use of fans in the Postal Service.

Personnel cooling fans discussed in this policy include:

- Ceiling fans, also known as Casablanca or paddle- fans.
- Pedestal mounted fans.
- Wall mounted fans.
- Column mounted fans.
- Portable box fans.
- Small personal fans, including 120 volt and battery operated fans.

Personnel cooling fans do not include fans the following:

- Part of the engineered heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system of the building. These systems provide heating, cooling, air filtration, and fresh air for personnel comfort and a healthful working environment.
- Integral to the design and proper functioning of building, mail processing, or other equipment.
- Part of sandblasting, welding, or painting equipment.

The guiding policy is to prevent anthrax spores from becoming airborne.

No one can predict another anthrax attack by mail. The extent to which personnel fan utilization would contribute to increased exposure or the spread of contamination in areas where individual letters are processed is not known. Therefore, fans directed at the feed section of the following equipment are still banned: AFCS, DBCS, CSBCS, MPBCS, AFSM 100, MLOCR, FSM 1000 (once the AFF/OCR is installed), and flats cancellers. The feed sections of this type of equipment have some form of pinch-belt where biohazards could likely escape from either letters or flats. We will continue to evaluate this specific ban through risk assessments and engineering studies.

Personnel cooling fans can be used in delivery units, manual distribution operations, docks, trailers, and elevated keying areas (BMC). They can also be used in other areas where there is a potential for heat-related illness, or in non-mail processing locations such as administrative offices. Additionally,

local management will consider the use of fans in non air-conditioned facilities or during temporary failures of air-conditioning systems. These fans should be positioned to cool the employees and avoid blowing on mail as much as practical.

Previously installed ductless air filtration units over mail processing equipment or elsewhere may be used.

While air curtains and the use of fans for custodial floor drying (in areas away from mail processing equipment) are not specifically in the scope of this policy letter, local management may elect to use them.

We will continue to evaluate this policy and all other bioterrorism prevention procedures, through consultation with health and safety officials, and risk/threat assessments.

Patrick R. Donahoe
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