

# Talking to Your Children About Biohazard

It is important to reassure your child that you are safe at work.



Try to answer questions that your children ask in a timely, honest and direct manner. If you don't know the answer to a question, tell your children you don't have the answer. If answering the question will help you and your child, try to make time to find the answer together, if possible.

**It is usually best for children to get information directly from their parents.** Consider reaching out to children who are not asking questions to discuss what is happening, to learn what they think and how they feel about the situation. Children who go to school, communicate with people outside of the home and/or who watch TV may hear information about a biohazard alert at the Postal Service. Lack of information and not giving "permission" to talk about things can encourage fear and misunderstanding.



**It is usually very helpful to directly acknowledge what your children have to say.** It may seem silly, but rephrasing and repeating what they said to you about important issues shows the child that you listened and understood

what they are trying to convey. Acknowledging their feelings can encourage a child to open up and talk more.

The following are tips to help you reassure your family that you are safe at your work place.

- Talk with your children at a level they can understand.
- Be honest when sharing your feelings with your children. "It scares me a little too, but we are safe and I am going to take possible precautions."
- Offer all the realistic reassurance you can. "Experts are working hard to make sure that the building is completely safe before anyone can go back in."
- Be prepared to address tough questions and requests. Your child may ask you not to go to work. Acknowledge their concern and explain your decision for continuing to work. For example, "I know you are worried and that you don't want anything to happen to me. I am going to continue doing everything I can to keep myself safe."
- Children can think "all or nothing." Take care to ensure your children understand the problem in its proper proportion.
- Encourage your children to continue to talk with you and let you know how they are feeling whenever they like.
- Offer physical reassurance — hugs and spending time together may relieve some of their concerns.
- Continue to use your parenting skills, knowledge of your child and family traditions to reaffirm your love for one another and offer one another support and comfort.