

MAIL PREVENTION THEFT

Every day, the U. S. Postal Service works hard to deliver efficiently and safely millions of checks, money orders, credit cards, and other valuable items. Unfortunately, thieves know this and are waiting to steal your mail. With mail deliveries to be made to well over 100 million addresses across the nation, the Postal Inspection Service cannot be everywhere to protect your mail.

To make it harder for thieves to steal your mail:

- Never send cash or coins in the mail. Use checks or money orders.
- Make sure your mailbox is secured and in good condition. Your postmaster can tell you how to improve your mailbox's condition.
- Promptly remove mail from your mailbox after delivery, especially if you are expecting checks, credit cards, food coupons, and other negotiable items. If you will not be home when valuable items are expected, ask a trusted friend or neighbor to pick up your mail.
- Have your local post office hold your mail while you are on vacation or absent from your home for a long period of time.
- If you do not receive a check, food coupon or other valuable mail you are expecting, contact the issuing agency immediately.
- Immediately notify your post office and the people you do business with through the mail if you change your address.
- Address your mail legibly and properly. Include complete return address, including street and apartment numbers, and nine-digit ZIP Code.
- Always deposit your mail in a Postal Service mail collection box or mail slot at your local post office or hand your mail to your letter carrier. Never place your outgoing mail for your carrier to pick up in an unprotected mailbox or area where it can be easily stolen.
- Consider starting a neighborhood watch program. By exchanging work and vacation schedules with trusted friends and neighbors, you can watch each other's mailboxes (as well as homes). If you observe a mail thief at work, you can call the local police immediately and then the nearest postal inspector.

If you believe your mail has been stolen, report it immediately to your local postmaster or nearest Postal Inspector. You will be asked to complete PS Form 2016, Mail Theft and Vandalism Complaint. Analysis of Forms 2016 helps Postal Inspectors in determining if the theft of your mail is isolated or part of a larger mail theft problem in your neighborhood, and in locating and apprehending mail thieves.