

Avoiding Mail Box Theft

Mail box theft is an ongoing problem in this day and age of sophisticated scanners and printers. Thieves are getting better and better at altering checks and changing credit card information for their own uses. You can help prevent much of this activity by taking the following steps:

- Do not leave outgoing mail in your unlocked mailbox. It is safest to deposit mail inside your local post office. If you use a collection box, make sure to use one that is not full, and deposit mail shortly before the next scheduled pickup time. Do not let your mail sit in a collection box overnight, especially on weekends.
- Promptly pick up your incoming mail once it has been delivered to your mailbox.
- Arrange for your mail to be delivered to a Post Office box for a small fee.
- Have regular income checks deposited electronically into your bank account with "Direct Deposit" service. It is usually free of charge.
- Be observant of activities on your street, including those near your letter carrier, his/her vehicle, residential mailboxes, and collection boxes.
- Immediately report any suspicious persons or activity by calling 911 while suspects are still present! Remember, do not jeopardize your safety, but BE A GOOD WITNESS!
- The Postal Service pays rewards up to \$10,000 for information and services leading up to the arrest and conviction of mail thieves. Report suspects or crime information to Postal Inspectors, 24 hours a day at 626-405-1200.
- Promptly report nonreceipt of credit cards, checks and other valuable mail to the senders.
- Immediately notify the post office and mailers if you change your address. If you are going on vacation, notify the post office, or have a trusted friend or neighbor pick up your mail promptly after delivery.
- If your mail is stolen, you can take the following steps to avoid fraudulent use of your checking account by:
 1. Write in full the payee, memo, and amount portions, filling up each line completely.
 2. Use thick, dark ink to write your checks. Roller-ball, felt tip and fountain pens are best; ball point and permanent ink pens are most easily altered.
 3. Purchase checks through institutions that use tamper-resistant paper and ink.
- Join Neighborhood Watch. Remember, if you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem.

Thank you for your efforts at crime prevention!