

# Preventing Mail Theft

The U.S. Postal Service reaches every home and business in the country. The vast majority of the mail it delivers arrives intact, but thieves persist in their efforts to steal it.

## What you can do to protect your mail from thieves:

- Use the letter slots inside your Post Office for your mail, or hand it to a letter carrier.
- Pick up your mail promptly after delivery. Don't leave it in your mailbox overnight. If you're expecting checks, credit cards, or other negotiable items, ask a trusted friend or neighbor to pick up your mail.
- If you don't receive a check or other valuable mail you're expecting, contact the issuing agency immediately.
- If you change your address, immediately notify your Post Office and anyone with whom you do business via the mail.
- Don't send cash in the mail.
- Tell your Post Office when you'll be out of town, so they can hold your mail until you return.
- Report all suspected mail theft to a Postal Inspector.
- 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).
- Consult with your local Postmaster for the most up-to-date regulations on mailboxes, including the availability of locked centralized or curbside mailboxes.

If you see a mail thief at work, or if you believe your mail was stolen, call 9-1-1 immediately, then call Postal Inspectors at 877-876-2455 (press 3)



## Ramsey County Sheriff's Office Public Safety Services Division

1411 Paul Kirkwold Drive  
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 RAMSEY COUNTY

# Prevent Check Fraud

Americans lose over a billion dollars a year to check-related frauds, scams and thefts. One particular threat is check washing, a scheme that is easy to execute, but even easier to prevent through precautionary measures.

Thieves who use check washing begin their scheme by obtaining someone else's check, often through stealing outgoing or incoming mail that is unattended, or outright stealing checks from individuals or businesses.

Washing a check is a fairly simple process, and checks that lack appropriate security features and are written in standard ballpoint or felt-tip pen make prime candidates for it.

## **Protect your checks and bank account:**

- Use checks with security features, including security ink and chemically sensitive paper, to protect against check washing.
- Do not have your driver's license or Social Security number printed on your check.
- Mail your bills safely. Don't leave mail in a mailbox overnight or drop it off for pickup on a Sunday or holiday when the post office is closed.
- Do not leave rent payments in drop boxes. Mail or hand them to your landlord directly.
- Based on ink security studies, it is highly recommended that you use a gel pen. Gel ink contains tiny particles of color that are trapped into the paper, making check washing a lot more difficult.
- Strictly monitor your bank account activity. Review your bank activity for suspicious transactions as often as possible, preferably daily.

If you are a victim of check theft or fraud call 9-1-1 immediately



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