

ON YOUR SIDE

E-Bulletin

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*An informative presentation from your Pre-Paid Legal
District of Columbia/Maryland Provider*

How to Protect Your Mail from Thieves

Every day, the U.S. Postal Service safely and efficiently delivers millions of checks, money orders, credit cards and other valuable items. Unfortunately, thieves know this, and are waiting to steal your mail. Postal Inspectors across the country work to protect your mail, but with deliveries to well over 100 million addresses, the Postal Inspection Service can't do the job alone. Make it harder for thieves to steal *your* mail. Follow these tips:

- Never send cash or coins in the mail. Use checks or money orders.
- Promptly remove mail from your mailbox after delivery, especially if you're expecting checks, credit cards or other negotiable items. If you won't be home when the items are expected, ask a trusted friend or neighbor to pick up your mail.
- Have your local post office hold your mail while you're on vacation, or absent from your home for a long period of time.
- 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.
- Always deposit your mail in a mail slot at your local post office, or hand it to your letter carrier.
- 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, call the local police immediately, and then your nearest Postal Inspector.

If you believe your mail was stolen, report it immediately to your local postmaster or nearest Postal Inspector. You'll be asked to file a formal complaint using PS Form 2016, *Mail Theft and Vandalism Complaint*. By analyzing information collected from the form, Postal Inspectors may determine whether your problem is isolated or part of a larger mail theft problem in your neighborhood--and it may help Inspectors locate and apprehend the thieves.

Please never hesitate to contact your Provider Firm as well. We at Weinstock, Friedman, & Friedman, P.A., are here to assist you and help you work through problems such as these. We are here to help you foresee some ramifications should mail theft occur.

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