

THE DENVER CENTER FOR CRIME VICTIMS



CRIME PREVENTION TIPS REGARDING YOUR MAIL

Think about what winds up in your mailbox – checks from employers, mutual funds, insurance companies and government benefits programs; statements from banks, credit unions, and credit card companies; a box of new bank checks and outgoing checks to pay bills; forms for a driver’s license or passport renewals; applications for new credit cards; mortgage applications listing all your assets and bank account numbers. **Imagine what results when these keys to financial life are stolen.**

To keep your paper trail of everyday financial transactions out of thieves’ hands:

- Never put outgoing mail in your mailbox. Mail at work or drop it in a collection box.
- When using a collection box, do not deposit mail after the last pickup of the day.
- Deposit routine checks – such as payroll, Social Security, or investment dividends – automatically into your bank account. All transactions are protected under electronic transfer laws.
- Promptly review bank and credit card statements. Report discrepancies immediately. Most financial institutions will cover losses due to fraud, as long as you are not negligent and alert them quickly.
- Limit personal information printed on your checks to name, address, and telephone number. Never include your date of birth, driver’s license number or Social Security number.
- Don’t give out your credit card number or bank Personal Identification Number (PIN) during unsolicited telephone calls. The “bank teller” who calls to “verify” your PIN is a con man hoping to plunder your bank account.
- Destroy personal finance records, such as canceled checks, unused deposit slips, ATM receipts, and bank statements before throwing them away.
- Tear up unwanted pre-approved credit card solicitations. They are buried treasures for criminals who engage in “dumpster diving.”
- Retrieve your mail as soon as it arrives or ask a trusted neighbor to pick it up.
- Instruct the post office to hold your mail while you are away on trips.
- Help stop mail theft by reporting it. The U.S. Postal Service offers rewards of up to \$5,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of violators. Call your local Postal Inspection Office or the toll-free postal crimes hotline: 1-800-654-8896.

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