

THE DENVER CENTER FOR CRIME VICTIMS

CRIME PREVENTION TIPS REGARDING YOUR MAIL

Daily, the U.S. Postal Service safely and efficiently delivers checks, money orders, credit cards and other valuable items. Unfortunately, such valuable items are attractive to thieves. With deliveries to more than 100 million addresses, the Postal Inspection Service gives these tips to keep your everyday financial transactions out of thieves' hands:

- **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.
- **Never put outgoing mail in your mailbox.** Mail at work or drop in a collection box. When using a collection box, **do not deposit mail after the last pickup of the day.**
- **Deposit routine checks**—payroll, Soc. Sec. 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 cover losses due to fraud, as long as you are not negligent and alert them quickly.
- **If you don't receive a check or other valuable mail or package you're expecting,** contact the issuing agency or sender immediately.
- **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. Banks will not ask for your PIN number on the phone.
- **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 mailings.** They are buried treasures for criminals who engage in "dumpster diving."
- **Instruct the post office to hold your mail while you are away on trips or absent from home for a long period of time.**
- **If you change your address,** immediately notify your post office and anyone with whom you do business by mail.
- **Help stop mail theft by reporting it.** The U.S. Postal Service offers rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction of violators. Call 1-877-876-2455.
- **Start a Neighborhood Watch Program.** By exchanging work/vacation schedules with trusted friends/neighbors, you can watch each other's mailboxes (and homes).