

Mail Theft Awareness & Prevention

Mail theft occurs in every corner of the United States; rural areas, urban areas and even in the beautiful *City of Sunfish Lake*.

Theft of mail is a crime in which perpetrators randomly search mailboxes for easy money in the form of gift cards, cash or checks sent to the homeowner. Some homeowners aren't even aware that this type of theft has occurred until well after the crime has taken place. Awareness is the first step in the prevention of mail theft.

Mail Thieves will also look for personal information that they can use to access a homeowner's credit card and banking information. This type of theft is called Identity Theft. Local identity theft has grown significantly in recent years due to many factors including the wide spread use of internet commerce, increased use of credit and debit cards, as well as the slump in the recent economy.

THE FOLLOWING TIPS CAN HELP YOU PREVENT THIS FROM HAPPENING TO YOU OR ONE OF YOUR LOVED ONES:

- ☒ Never use your mailbox to send mail. Place mail in designated mailboxes, take it to the post office, or give it directly to your mail carrier.
- ☒ Never send cash or coins in the mail. Use checks or money orders.
- ☒ Promptly remove mail for your mailbox after delivery, especially if you are expecting checks, credit cards or any financial information.
- ☒ Have your local post office hold your mail while you are on vacation. Utilize a trusted neighbor to pick up your mail daily if you do not place a hold on your mail at the post office.
- ☒ Utilize a mailbox with a lock. The slot on the mailbox must be large enough to accommodate the customer's normal daily mail volume. The post office or mail carrier does not unlock the mail box nor can they accept a key to do so. There are standards for mailboxes and these mailboxes can be purchased at hardware stores or home improvement stores. The local postmaster may approve a curbside mailbox constructed by a customer who, for aesthetic or other reasons, does not want to use an approved manufactured box.
- ☒ If you suspect that mail has been stolen from your mailbox, report it immediately to the police by calling anytime at 651-322-2323. You may also report it to the United States Postal Inspectors online at <https://postalinspectors.uspis.gov>
- ☒ Immediately report any suspicious persons or vehicles by calling 911.
- ☒ Consider starting a neighborhood watch program or at least get together with neighbors and the police to discuss issues in your area. The police department can be the conduit to get people together.

THE WEST ST PAUL POLICE DEPARTMENT IS A RESOURCE FOR YOU - DO NOT HESITATE TO CALL IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE BEEN VICTIMIZED OR HAVE CONCERNS.

CRIME PREVENTION SPECIALIST, LAURA VAUGHAN, CAN BE REACHED AT 651-552-4235 TO DISCUSS AN IDENTITY/MAIL THEFT PROGRAM OR ANY OTHER CRIME PREVENTION TOPICS YOU MAY HAVE QUESTIONS REGARDING.