Protecting Your Mail

The mail you receive and send includes information that deserves special attention. Everything from account numbers and balances on financial accounts to the name and account number on checks you mail can be valuable to thieves and other scam artists.

Here are some ideas to help keep your mail secure:

1. Never send cash or coins. Use checks and money orders.

2. Do not leave mail you receive in your mailbox for any longer than necessary. If you are going to be gone, have a family member or trusted friend take the mail from your mail box. If you are going to be gone for an extended period, have the post office hold your mail until you return.

3. Instead of placing outgoing mail in your mailbox with the flag up, drop off mail in a mail slot at a blue drop off box or at the post office. You can also just hand your outgoing mail to your mail carrier.

4. If you see suspicious individuals around your mailbox, contact the post office or the police.
5. Investigate getting a lockable mailbox if you are very concerned.

6. Consider using a post office box or renting a private mailbox at a shipping and delivery store.

7. Use checks that are tamper-resistant and write checks in ink.

8. Have incoming checks automatically deposited instead of being sent to you. This direct deposit service is probably available for your paycheck. The Social Security Administration also can accommodate direct deposit.

9. If you are expecting a check or other valuable piece of mail and do not receive it, contact the sender. You can ask them to stop payment on a check if you think it has been stolen.

10. If you believe your mail has been stolen, contact your postmaster.

11. If you do not receive your mail all of a sudden, it is possible that someone filed a change of address with the post office using your name. Contact your post office to inquire.

12. If you move or change address, notify the post office and anyone that you do business with through the mail.