

# Mail and Identity Theft

According to US Postal Inspectors, **mail theft is out of control**, and much of the theft is made easy because rural mailboxes are unsecured.

Odds are increasing that you are or know a victim of mail theft. Even according to the US Postal Inspectors, in some parts of the country mail theft is out of control, and last year alone arrested over 6,000 mail theft suspects.

Long gone are the days when we felt like our mailbox was safe from thieves. Many people are the victims of mail theft in our area. With so many rural mailboxes set in places where it is ideal for thieves to steal un-observed it is very easy to rob us of our security, our money, even our very identity!

Mail theft creates some very real problems:

1. It is hard enough dealing with what you know has been stolen, but what is even more agonizing is not knowing what else has been stolen!
2. The time and effort resulting from this crime is more than just an inconvenience. Many people end up canceling credit cards and getting new ones, call businesses and friends to ask about mail that should have been received.
3. Many credit card companies are sending blank checks with every statement. Thieves see a gold mine with these checks because they are so easy to use!
4. Identity theft.

**According to the Federal Trade Commission**, some ways identity thieves use your personal information is they call your credit card issuer and, pretending to be you, ask to change the mailing address on your credit card account. The impostor then runs up charges on your account. Because your bills are being sent to the new address, it may take some time before you realize there is a problem. They open a new credit card account, using your name, date of birth and SSN. When they use the credit card and don't pay the bills, the delinquent account is reported on your credit report. They may even establish phone or wireless service in your name and run up large phone bills.

If you believe your mail has been stolen, report it immediately to the police and your local postmaster or nearest Postal Inspector.

One of the easiest ways to protect against this crime is to invest in a **SECURE, LOCKING MAILBOX**. For individuals, this will secure all of your incoming mail. For group boxes you can also secure outgoing mail and incoming packages. The cost is minimal compared to the security that can be yours with this simple installation.