



# PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST MAIL THEFT IN MEDINA

## CRIME PREVENTION: MEDINA POLICE DEPARTMENT

The U.S. Postal Service® is trusted by Americans to deliver billions of letters and parcels each year, and the vast majority of them safely reach their destinations. However, mail theft is a serious problem and a serious offense. A victim of mail theft faces the loss of more than just everyday correspondence; they could miss important notices, financial information, checks, and perhaps even become a victim of identity theft. Postal Inspectors investigate these crimes and arrest thousands of mail and package thieves each year. Even so, there are extra measures you may take to guarantee that your mail reaches its destination without incident.

**Check Your Mail Daily:** Even if you aren't necessarily expecting anything, make collecting your mail a daily ritual. Remember that: An identity thief can get significant information on even a basic power bill. The more time you leave your mailbox full, the longer a thief has to grab it. When placing online orders, be proactive and have a look at alternate delivery options. If you know you won't be home, think about having packages delivered somewhere else. You could also ask to have things delivered to a dependable neighbor.

**Inquire About Overdue Mail:** If you do not receive a check, credit card, or other valuable mail you're expecting, contact the sender as soon as possible and inquire about it.

**Be Careful What You Are Mailing:** Never send cash or gift cards since they are extremely difficult to recover and are in high demand. Checks are also a target, as they can be washed and reused by scammers or sought after for the account numbers printed at the bottom.

**Plan For Being Away:** If you will be gone for more than a few days, select a responsible party to pick up your mail or make arrangements with the Post Office for a vacation hold. Similarly, if you're expecting a package delivery and you'll be gone all day at work, ask a dependable neighbor to take it to their home until you get back.

**Go Paperless When Possible:** By doing this, you'll receive less private information in the mail. Do yourself a favor and accept the offer of receiving electronic copies of your statements or bills from your bank, credit card provider, utility provider, etc. rather than having them mailed to you.

**Don't Use Your Mailbox For Outgoing Mail:** Mail can be left at a post office building mail slot, at a Postal Service mailbox, or with your letter carrier. By doing this, you can be sure that your valuable belongings are not exposed while they are waiting to be collected from a mailbox. Thieves are drawn to packages left in residential mailboxes with the red flag raised.

**Secure Your Mailbox:** A visible home security system, well-lit surroundings, and a secure mailbox or mail slot can combine to create a triple threat against any uninvited visitors who might be after your mail.

**Know What You Are Expecting:** The Post Office offers Informed Delivery, which allows you to digitally preview incoming mail through scanned images of the exterior address side of letter-sized mail. Visit the USPS Informed Delivery website to sign up for the program free of charge. If you are expecting to receive checks or sensitive information regularly, consider getting a post office box. [informedelivery.usps.com](https://informedelivery.usps.com).

Remember, mail theft is a federal offense. If you believe you were a victim of mail theft, report the incident to both local law enforcement and the Post Office. If you observe mail theft in progress call 911.

Medina Police Department: For emergencies, call 911 – Office (425) 233-6420