

How to prevent check fraud



Did you know that the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) plays a crucial role in keeping your mail and money safe? As the federal law enforcement branch of the U.S. Postal Service, the USPIS works tirelessly to protect you from illegal activities like mail theft and check fraud. Check out these helpful tips to safeguard your personal financial information.

How to protect your mail

- ✓ Get your mail promptly after delivery. Don't leave it in your mailbox overnight.
- ✓ Contact the sender if you don't receive mail that you're expecting.
- ✓ If you're heading out of town, ask the post office to hold your mail until you return.
- ✓ Consider buying security envelopes to conceal the contents of your mail.
- ✓ Sign up for informed delivery at USPS.com. It sends you daily notifications of incoming mail and packages.
- ✓ Use the letter slots inside your Post Office to send mail.

How to protect your checks

- ✓ Use pens with indelible black ink so it is more difficult for a criminal to wash your checks.
- ✓ Don't leave blank spaces in the payee or amount lines.
- ✓ Don't write personal details, such as your Social Security number, credit card information, driver's license number or phone number on checks.
- ✓ Use mobile or online banking to access copies of your checks and ensure they are not altered.
- ✓ While logged in, review your bank activity and statements for errors.
- ✓ If your bank provides an image of a paid check, review the back of the check to ensure the endorsement is correct and matches the intended payee, since criminals will sometimes deposit your check unaltered.
- ✓ Consider using e-check, ACH automatic payments and other electronic and/or mobile payments.
- ✓ Follow up with payees to make sure that they received your check.

What to do if you're a victim

- ✓ Report to your local community bank and request copies of all fraudulent checks. Your community bank is your ally in helping you avoid or recover from check fraud.
- ✓ If mailed, provide details (How, When, Where). These details matter to help us determine the point of compromise in the mail stream.
- ✓ Provide law enforcement with copies of checks and details about Bank of First Deposit (BOFD) for all stolen/ altered and counterfeit checks.