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## **After a Spate of Mailbox Thefts, Darien Police Advise Public Not to Put Outgoing Mail in Their Mailboxes**

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Recent reports around town of stolen mail involving checks being cashed has caused the Darien Police Department to recommend avoiding use of home mailboxes for outgoing bills.

Envelopes containing checks should be mailed from the Darien Post Office or paid online, if possible, police say. For those who have mailed checks, regularly review bank or credit card statements to confirm that the amount and payee are correct. Blue U.S. Postal Service mailboxes are also recommended, as is stopping mail service when out of town.

The Police Department also passed along advice from the U.S. Postal Service. Darien police are working with postal inspectors to investigate recent thefts of mailed checks.

**Full Text of Police Statement on Preventing Mail Theft**

*Here's the statement released Thursday by the Police Department:*

Darien Police have received recent reports where residents have had their outgoing mail stolen and checks cashed. It has been reported that the original checks had been altered into much larger amounts than the original checks and then withdrawn out of the victims' bank accounts.

It is recommended that residents that have to pay a bill or send someone a check to preferably drop it off directly inside the Post Office or pay the bill online if you can.

If you need to mail a check, regularly review your bank statements to make sure the check has been cashed in the correct amount and to the correct business/person. Police recommend reviewing your bank accounts if you have mailed a check over the past several weeks.

Other tips to consider:

- ? Use the blue U.S.P.S. boxes for outgoing letters, or go directly into U.S. Post Office.
- ? Remember to cancel mail delivery during vacations and out of town trips.
- ? Use online billing methods to take care of financial matters.

Darien detectives are working along with the U.S. postal inspectors regarding these incidents.

U.S. postal Inspectors provided the following statement.

The U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) is the law enforcement, crime prevention, and security arm of the Postal Service. The U.S. Mail remains one of the most secure means of transmitting personal information. Every day, the U.S. Postal Service safely and efficiently delivers millions of checks, money orders, credit cards, and merchandise. Unfortunately, such items are also attractive to thieves. That's why Postal Inspectors across the country are at work to protect our customer's mail.

Here's a few tips on what customers can do to protect their mail from thieves:

- Hand outgoing mail to your letter carrier, or mail it inside at the Post Office, or a secure receptacle at your place of business.
- Never send cash or coins in the mail. Use checks or money orders. Ask your bank for "secure" checks that are more difficult to alter.
- If you see any suspicious substance, such as glue or other sticky product on a mailbox or mail receptacle, please notify Postal Inspectors.

Customers can make reports by submitting an online complaint at [www.uspis.gov](http://www.uspis.gov) or by calling us at

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877-876-2455. By analyzing information from the complaint, postal inspectors can determine if the problem is part of a larger mail theft problem in the customer's neighborhood — and their input may help Postal Inspectors locate and apprehend the thieves.

If you see someone other than your mail carrier removing mail or if you had your mail stolen, please contact the Darien Police Department at 203-662-5300.