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## POSTAL NEWS

Contact: Albert Ruiz  
[albert.ruiz@usps.gov](mailto:albert.ruiz@usps.gov)  
[usps.com/news](https://usps.com/news)



### **USPS, Postal Inspection Service Roll Out Expanded Crime Prevention Measures To Crack Down on Mail Theft, Enhance Employee Safety and Strengthen Consumer Protections**

*Joint Project Safe Delivery initiative focused on reducing letter carrier robberies and mail theft; preventing change of address fraud; defeating counterfeit postage*

WASHINGTON — The United States Postal Service (Postal Service) and United States Postal Inspection Service (Postal Inspection Service) today announced expanded actions to protect Postal employees and the security of the nation's mail and packages as threats and attacks on letter carriers and mail fraud incidents have escalated concurrently with a national rise in crime. The Postal Service and Postal Inspection Service held a joint briefing for Congress members and staff on these efforts on May 11, 2023.

“As crime rises, so do the threats against our public servants,” said Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer Louis DeJoy. “The men and women of the Postal Service are walking our nation's streets every day to fulfil our mission of delivering mail and packages to the American people. Every Postal employee deserves to work in safety and to be free from targeting by criminals seeking to access the public's mail.”

“We're doubling down on our efforts to protect our Postal employees and the security of the mail. We are hardening targets – both physical and digital – to make them less desirable to thieves and working with our law enforcement partners to bring perpetrators to justice,” said Postal Inspection Service Chief Gary Barksdale.

Incidents of letter carrier robberies are on the rise across the nation. In FY22, 412 USPS letter carriers were robbed on the job. With 305 incidents reported in the first half of FY23, these incidents are increasingly more prevalent. Additionally, the agency reported an increase in high volume mail theft incidents from mail receptacles including blue collection boxes: 38,500 in FY22 and more than 25,000 in the first half of FY23. The Postal Service will continue to work with its unions and management associations on training and employee education for letter carriers and other postal workers.

Recognizing these ongoing safety threats, the Postal Service and the Postal Inspection Service are expanding their Project Safe Delivery crime prevention initiative to protect Postal employees and facilities, prevent mail and package theft and enforce the law against individuals who perpetrate crimes against Postal employees or engage in mail and package theft. Expanded Project Safe Delivery actions include:

- **Reducing Letter Carrier Robberies and Mail Theft** – As part of Project Safe Delivery, USPS and USPIS are taking action to harden physical targets against criminal activity and reduce criminal acts against postal employees including:
  - **12,000 High Security Blue Collection Boxes To Be Installed Nationwide.** The Postal Service is hardening blue collection boxes making access to their contents more difficult for criminals. These boxes are now being deployed in high security risk areas through the next fiscal year. The Postal Service will continue to evaluate replacing additional existing blue collection boxes with these enhanced boxes.
  - **49,000 Electronic Locks to Replace Antiquated Arrow Locks.** There has been an increase in letter carrier robberies nationwide where criminals are targeting letter carriers for their Arrow and Modified Arrow Lock (MAL) Keys. Criminals use Arrow and MAL keys to steal mail from secure mail receptacles to commit financial crimes, including altering checks to commit check fraud. To make Arrow Keys less valuable for criminals, the Postal Service will replace 49,000 antiquated

arrow locks with electronic locks. New locks have been installed in select cities with installation to occur in additional major metropolitan areas soon. The Postal Service and the Postal Inspection Service are also increasing Arrow Key accountability reviews in select high Postal crime areas.

- **Preventing Change of Address Fraud** –The Postal Service processed more than 33 million change of address (COA) transactions in FY22. The majority of COA frauds are driven by an identity theft motive separate from the Postal Service. The Postal Service is not the intended target but implicated as the fraudster intercepts financially oriented mail, credit cards or checks. The Postal Service is embarking on strengthening authentication processes for all methods of COA – electronic, and hard copy format whether by mail or in-person. Actions include:
  - In April, the Postal Service implemented dual authentication Identity Verification Services for online change of addresses transactions to provide enhanced security controls to reduce fraud.
  - Effective May 31, the Postal Service will offer enhanced in-person change of address transactions at Post Offices and retail outlets. COA customers can verify their identity by presenting an approved form of identification to a retail clerk.
  - Postal Service customers seeking a COA will now receive a validation letter at their old address and receive an activation letter at their new address.
  - As an additional safeguard, the Postal Service will no longer accept third-party change of address submissions.
- **Defeating counterfeit postage** – In FY2022, the Postal Service and Postal Inspection Service seized more than 340,000 packages with counterfeit postage and more than 7.7 million counterfeit stamps with an estimated \$7.8 million loss avoidance for the Postal Service. Expanded actions to crack down on fraudulent postage include:
  - Postal Service interdictions of packages with counterfeit labels affixed. The Postal Service will fully exercise new authority to take possession and dispose of packages identified with counterfeit postage.
  - Reviews of shipments on Postal Service docks and during warehouse outreach visits
  - Shut down of websites and closure of eCommerce accounts selling counterfeit postage
  - Engagement and partnership with eCommerce companies to disrupt activity
  - Customs and Border Protection (CBP) collaboration
  - Promotion of the Inspection Service’s rewards program which provides rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction of a person that unlawfully uses, reuses, or forges postage stamps, postage meter stamps, permit imprints, or other postage; or uses, sells, or possesses with the intent to sell any used, forged, or counterfeit postage stamp or other postage.

Throughout the year, the Postal Inspection Service will continue to partner with federal, state, and local authorities to enforce the laws and bring criminals to justice. The Postal Service and Postal Inspection Service will continue to adapt to evolving security threats and implement expanded measures to safeguard Postal employees and preserve the security of the mail that Postal Service customers expect and deserve.

### **Action the American Public Can Take To Help Prevent Mail Theft**

Customers can take several steps to protect their mail and their letter carriers, including:

- Don’t let incoming or outgoing mail sit in your mailbox. You can significantly reduce the chance of being victimized by simply removing your mail from your mailbox every day.
- Deposit outgoing mail through a number of secure manners including inside your local Post Office or at your place of business or by handing it to a letter carrier.

- Sign up for [Informed Delivery](#) and get daily digest emails that preview your mail and packages scheduled to arrive soon.
- Become involved and engaged in your neighborhood via neighborhood watches and local social media groups to spread awareness and share information.
- Keep an eye out for your letter carrier. If you see something that looks suspicious, or you see someone following your carrier, call 911.

Customers are encouraged to report stolen mail as soon as possible by submitting an online complaint to the Postal Inspection Service at [www.uspis.gov/report](http://www.uspis.gov/report) or calling 877-876-2455. Additionally, individuals are encouraged to report allegations of Postal Service employee misconduct, including attempts to corrupt a Postal Service employee, to the USPS OIG at 1-888-877-7644 or [www.uspsoig.gov](http://www.uspsoig.gov).

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**Please Note:** The United States Postal Service is an independent federal establishment, mandated to be self-financing and to serve every American community through the affordable, reliable and secure delivery of mail and packages to nearly 165 million addresses six and often seven days a week. Overseen by a bipartisan Board of Governors, the Postal Service is implementing a 10-year transformation plan, [Delivering for America](#), to modernize the postal network, restore long-term financial sustainability, dramatically improve service across all mail and shipping categories, and maintain the organization as one of America's most valued and trusted brands.

The Postal Service generally receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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