

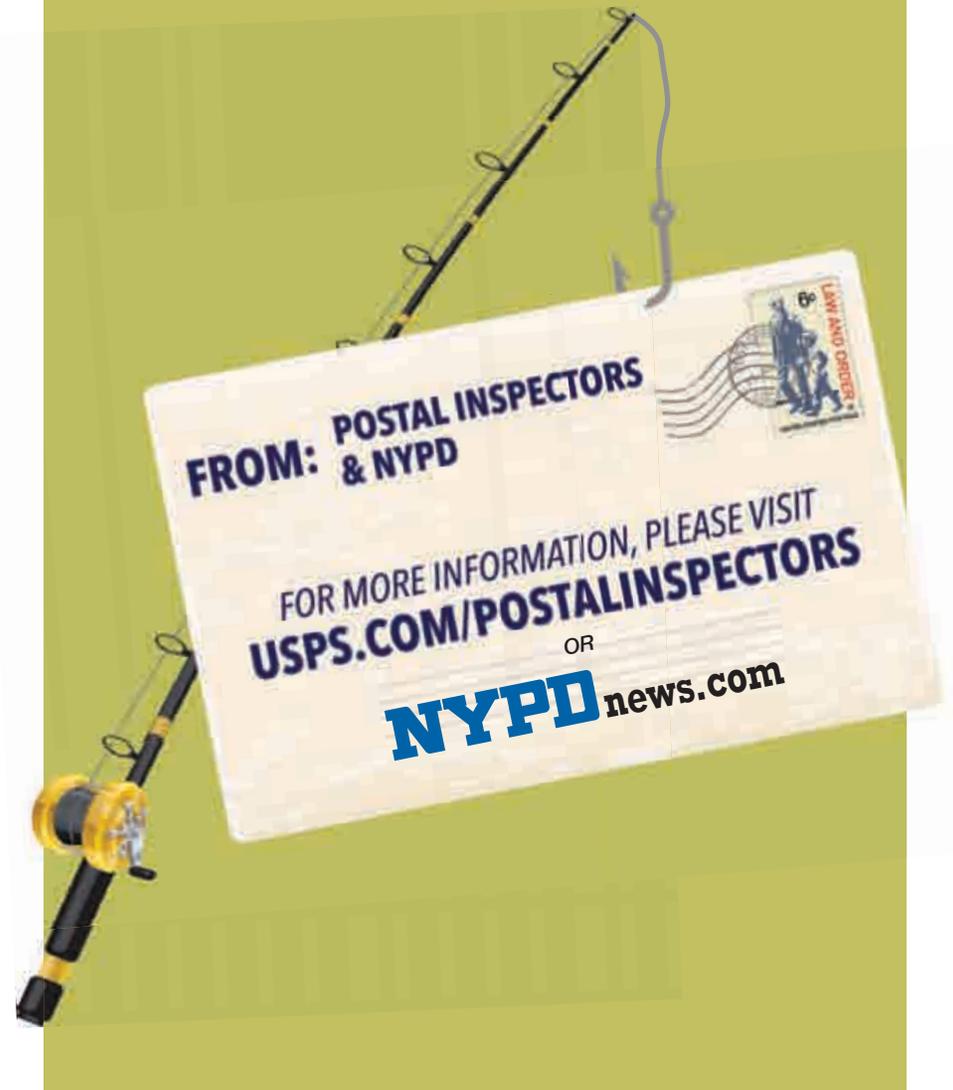


# NYPD

New York City Police Department

[www.nyc.gov/nypd](http://www.nyc.gov/nypd)

## PROTECT YOUR IDENTITY LEARN ABOUT MAIL FISHING & CHECK WASHING



**NYPD** Crime Prevention Division

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**Mailbox fishing** is the process in which thieves gain entry into the interior of mailboxes and steal mail. The purpose of stealing the mail is to obtain checks, credit/debit/gift cards and other personally identifiable information that would allow the thief and others to gain access to your finances.

### What can I do to prevent mailbox fishing?

- When you use a mailbox, deposit the mail as close to the scheduled pick-up time as possible.
- Drop mail containing checks and any other personally identifiable information directly at the Post Office or hand it directly to your mail carrier.
- Use a pen with pigmented (permanent) ink to write checks out. This ink prevents the altering of your checks.
- Whether you use the US Mail or other methods to move your money, remember to make record of the transaction, in case you need it for future reference.

**Check washing** is a process in which thieves use common household products to alter checks they stole out of mailboxes. They then make the checks payable to themselves or other parties.

### What can you do to prevent your checks from being altered?

- Use a pen with pigmented (permanent) ink to write checks. The ink is not easy to alter.
- Shred any voided or incorrectly written checks.
- Check your account balance frequently to ensure checks were cleared by the establishment that you wrote them out to. Note that thieves usually re-write the check for the original amount you wrote, but simply change the payee name.

