



HOLIDAY READINESS

We deliver security for the price of a stamp.

Halloween candy season — one of my personal favorites — is coming to an end and I'm counting down to the 50 percent off peanut butter pumpkins and fun-sized candy bars! Soon, many folks will be focused on the other holiday season just around the corner, and will start planning how to spend these important days and events with friends and family.

Sometimes, planning is easier than doing. Not all of us are fortunate enough to live near our loved ones. I decided to move halfway across the country from my family and friends more than 15 years ago. While my many moves — from the snow covered lands of Alaska to the deserts of the southwest to our nation's capital — have helped my career and personal growth, they've required a lot of reliance on the U.S. Postal Service to help me stay connected.

Because I don't live near family and friends, I often fly to spend the holidays and other important events with them. As you all know, baggage fees add up quickly, and those beautifully wrapped presents don't travel well in a suitcase. To cut down on the hassle and extra costs, I use USPS to mail my gifts ahead to my destination. In the last 15 years, these packages have always arrived intact and on time.

Unfortunately, some people insist on being celebration spoilsports and thieves of holiday spirit by trying to steal your holiday cards and gifts from your mailboxes and porches. Postal Inspectors know how important these cards, gifts and other packages are to you. That's why I, and the other 1,200 Postal Inspectors across the country, work so hard to make sure each letter and gift arrives at its destination safely and as sent.

Security is part of the package.

I know, a few of you are probably wondering what a Postal Inspector is and does. Well, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service is the federal law enforcement and security branch of the Postal Service. Postal Inspectors are mandated to protect your mail, the postal employees who process and deliver your mail, and the customers who receive that mail. Our mission is to ensure that the billions of pieces of mail handled by the Postal Service each year find their way to our customers unopened, unread, and intact with the help of our Postal Police Officers, technical, professional and other specialized support. All of this security comes with the price of a stamp.





UNITED STATES POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE

Because the holidays are just around the corner and so many of us will be mailing holiday cards and gifts, I'm asking for your help to keep your mail and packages safe. Here are a few tips to consider for mail safety this year:

- **Don't leave your delivered mail and packages unattended.** Just as you wouldn't leave your wallets and purses on the front seat of an unlocked car overnight, mail and packages shouldn't be left sitting in mailboxes or on front porches for any length of time.
- **Going out of town?** Hold your mail at your local Post Office. If you plan on taking a trip or know you won't be able to check your mail for a few days, consider using the **Hold Mail** service on *usps.com*. Letters and packages will be held securely at your Post Office until you pick them up or request they be delivered to your home.
- **Plan ahead.** Ship using **Hold for Pickup**. When shipping packages, you can choose the Hold for Pickup option, and the recipients can collect their packages at their local Post Office. If you are expecting a package, you can redirect it to your local Post Office by selecting **Hold for Pickup** using *Intercept a Package* under **Track & Manage** on *usps.com*.
- **Customize the delivery.** If you know the package will not fit in your mailbox and you won't be home to receive it, you can authorize the carrier to leave it in a specified location. Visit *usps.com*, enter the tracking number in **Track a Package**, and select **Delivery Instructions**.
- **Secure the shipment using USPS Special Services.** **Signature Confirmation** helps ensure the package ends up in the right hands by requiring a signature at the time of delivery. For your most valuable packages, you can opt for **Registered Mail** service. **Registered Mail** receives special handling from the time it's mailed until the time it's delivered, with documentation every step of the way.
- **Also, if you have a home security camera system,** ensure it captures activity at your front door and mailbox. If you catch any mail thieves in the act, save the video and alert your local Postal Inspectors. Video surveillance goes a long way in preventing crimes and catching bad guys.

For more great tips you can use not just during the holidays, but all year long, visit our website: *uspis.gov*.

I hope all of your special holiday deliveries get to the special people in your lives.

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