



PROJECT SAFE DELIVERY

COMBATting MAIL THEFT
AND LETTER CARRIER
ROBBERIES STRATEGY

OCTOBER 2023



UNITED STATES POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE

INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

> A MESSAGE FROM THE POSTMASTER GENERAL

The mission of the United States Postal Service ("Postal Service") is to bind all Americans across our nation through trusted, safe, and secure communications and services. A critical part of that mission includes protecting our customers, employees, and infrastructure from criminal activity and securing the mail from criminal misuse and attack.

The Postal Service has recently experienced a significant increase in mail theft and associated violent crimes directed at letter carriers. The Postal Service shares the concerns of its customers and employees, Congress, and the American public about this increased criminal activity. All Postal Service employees are entitled to a safe workplace and all Postal Service customers deserve the secure delivery of their

mail. We are committed to ensuring the safety of our employees and ensuring the secure delivery of mail at every level of this organization. Our law enforcement and security arm, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service ("Postal Inspection Service"), leads our efforts to secure the mail and protect our employees, including through collaborative efforts to implement enhanced security measures and the investigation of criminals who commit mail theft and attack Postal Service employees.

The Postal Service and the Postal Inspection Service are fully committed to the strategy articulated in this document. As it has done throughout its history, the Postal Service is committed to taking all practicable measures to ensure our nation's mail security, the safety of the men and women of the Postal Service, and provide the American public the best, most efficient service possible.



INTRODUCTION

> A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF POSTAL INSPECTOR

The Postal Inspection Service’s highest priority is and has always been the protection of Postal Service employees. As Postal Service employees and the mail have come under increased attack by criminals seeking to perpetrate financial crimes utilizing stolen mail, the Postal Inspection Service has significantly increased its efforts to protect both Postal Service employees and the mail. The Postal Inspection Service has taken a holistic approach to this through collaboration with the Postal Service to enhance the physical security of mail receptacles, increase awareness among Postal Service employees on how to remain safe while at work, increase awareness among the public of strategies to protect their mail, and focus on high impact investigations into attacks on Postal

Service employees and associated mail theft. This approach relies on collaboration across the Postal Service organization and also with local, state, and federal law enforcement partners, including the U.S. Postal Service Office of the Inspector General. It also includes important public, private partnerships, such as with the financial industry.

We have already made significant progress in implementing the strategy outlined in this document and we will continue to follow the blueprint laid out in it to ensure a successful, enterprise-wide approach to protecting Postal Service employees and securing the mail. As we have done throughout our history, the Postal Inspection Service remains committed to supporting the Postal Service and its mission to provide safe, reliable, and efficient service to the American public.



> EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Combatting mail theft and violent crimes targeting postal employees is of the highest priority for the Postal Service and the Postal Inspection Service. As the law enforcement arm of the Postal Service, the Postal Inspection Service leads the Postal Service’s efforts to protect all postal employees, including letter carriers and efforts to ensure the secure delivery of mail to the American public.

This *Combatting Mail Theft and Letter Carrier Robberies Strategy* (hereinafter the “Strategy”) is designed to guide decision making, coordination, and resource allocation throughout the Postal Inspection Service and the Postal Service. This Strategy aims to protect postal employees and the American public by securing the Postal Service delivery network from criminal attack, disrupting mail theft and violent crimes against postal employees, and empowering postal employees and the American public through the employment of prevention strategies.

The Postal Inspection Service employs a whole-of-government approach that relies

heavily on interagency cooperation—specifically with our partners in the Department of Justice, the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General, as well as other federal, state, and local law enforcement partners. Working with these partners and with all of the Postal Service, the Postal Inspection Service will achieve the following goals:

1. Enhance Delivery Security
2. Advance Intelligence Led Investigations
3. Deploy Communications and Increase Prevention Awareness
4. Invest in Tools, Technology, and Data Analytics
5. Deploy Advanced Training

The Postal Service is always working to keep the trust of the American public. The Postal Inspection Service plays a key role in maintaining that trust by protecting Postal Service employees, the American people, and the sanctity of the U.S. Mail.

This Strategy is a living document that will evolve in response to the changing nature of mail theft and violent crime targeting postal workers.



UNITED STATES POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE

BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND

Beginning around 2020, and continuing to present date, the Postal Service has experienced a significant growth in mail theft from mail receptacles primarily due to financially motivated crimes, notably including check fraud. This is evidenced by an 87% increase in reports of high-volume mail theft from mail receptacles between Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 and FY2022, with 20,574 reports in FY2019 and 38,535 reports in FY2022. The significant growth in mail theft and associated financial crimes likely has been driven by a marked shift by organized criminal groups towards the perpetration of low risk, high reward financial crimes. This is evidenced by Postal Inspection Service investigations, Department of Treasury data, and data from financial industry sources. Although there is likely no single cause for this shift, it likely has been driven in part by mass pandemic relief fraud perpetrated during the Covid-19 pandemic, the ease by which financial crimes may be perpetrated utilizing cyber enabled techniques, and a lax prosecutorial climate for property and financial crimes in some U.S. jurisdictions.

Prior to 2020, mail theft from mail receptacles was primarily perpetrated through forced entry or using fishing devices. However, that shifted as the Postal Service and the Postal Inspection Service strengthened the physical security of blue collection boxes. The efforts to strengthen the physical security of blue collection boxes has included the employment of anti-fishing devices, high security collection boxes (HSCBs), and modified Arrow locks (MALs). Despite physical security enhancements, blue collection boxes and other mail receptacles have remained an

attractive target for criminals who have sought to exploit design vulnerabilities.

During the same period as physical security enhancements were implemented, USPS began to experience a marked increase in letter carrier robberies. The significant growth in letter carrier robberies is evidenced by a 543% increase in letter carrier robberies between FY2019 and FY2022, with 64 letter carrier robberies in FY2019 and 412 letter carrier robberies in FY2022.



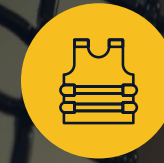


BACKGROUND



LOW RESOLUTION PHOTO-can we get high res?

STRATEGIC GOALS



UNITED STATES POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE

1.0

ENHANCE DELIVERY SECURITY

THE POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE HAS DEVELOPED FIVE (5) STRATEGIC GOALS THAT FORM THE STRATEGY. THESE GOALS FOCUS OUR EFFORTS IN A MANNER THAT WILL ENSURE SUCCESS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE:

-  1. **ENHANCE DELIVERY SECURITY**
-  2. **ADVANCE INTELLIGENCE LED INVESTIGATIONS**
-  3. **DEPLOY COMMUNICATIONS AND INCREASE PREVENTION AWARENESS**

-  4. **INVEST IN TOOLS, TECHNOLOGY AND DATA ANALYTICS**
-  5. **DEPLOY ADVANCED TRAINING**

This Strategy provides a broad outline of our priorities and sets the direction and approach for our future. It does not attempt to

detail every activity or initiative the Postal Inspection Service will pursue to achieve our strategic goals.

Security enhancements to components of the Postal Service network, from more secure mail receptacles to better locking mechanisms to increased security and accountability for Arrow keys, are some of the most important components to securing the mail from criminals and preventing associated Postal crimes, such as the robberies of letter carriers.

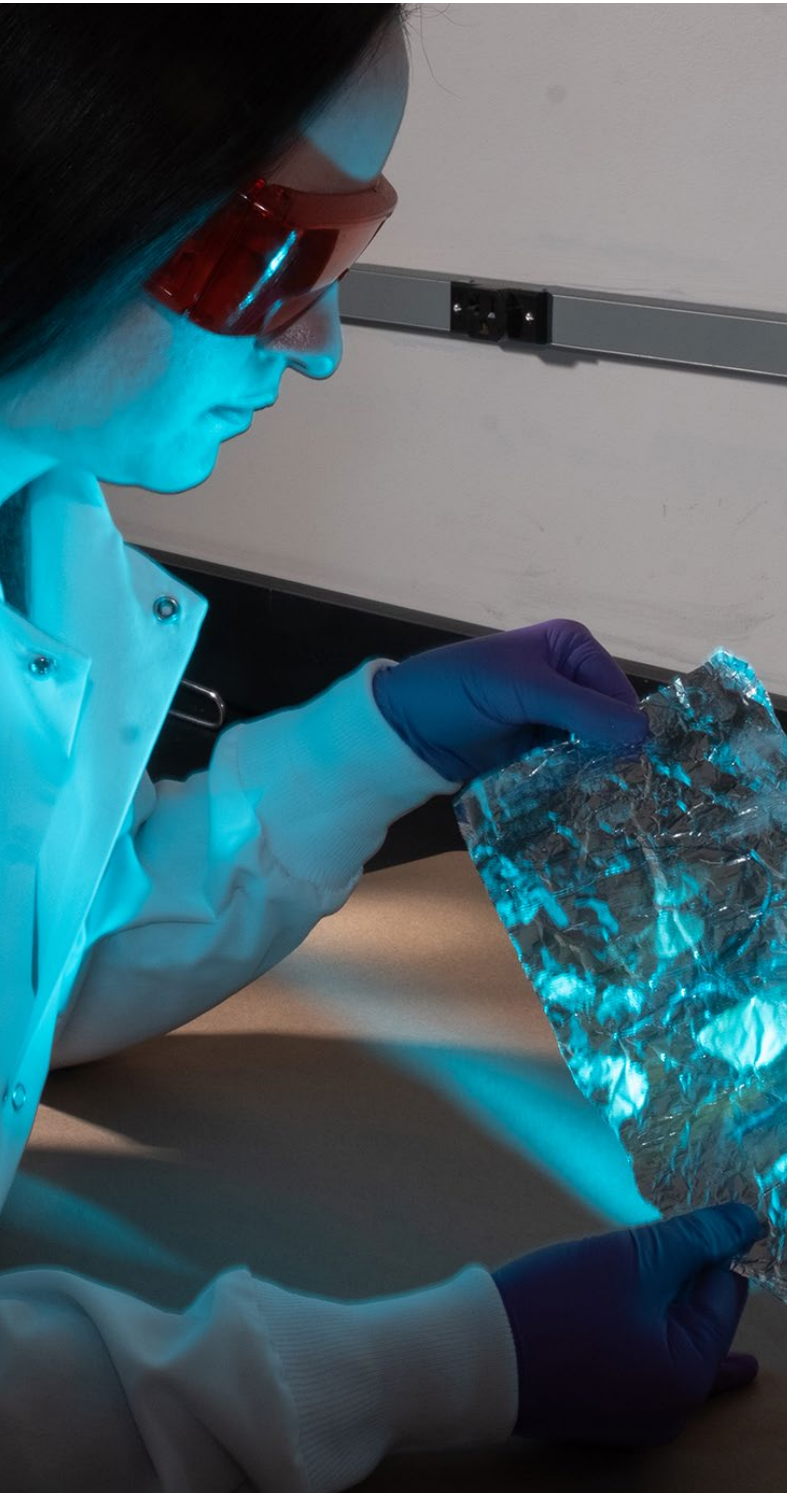
The Postal Inspection Service will work with the Postal Service to develop and deploy advanced technologies to secure and protect the Postal Service network and its employees. The Postal Inspection Service will also work with the Postal Service to identify and implement other security enhancements, including process improvements and collection box placement modifications.

1.1 INCREASE THE SECURITY OF POSTAL SERVICE MAIL RECEPTACLES

Postal Service mail receptacles are a core part of the Postal Service delivery network with mail receptacles often being the starting point or ending point for mail in the mailing process. Due to the location and vulnerabilities of some mail receptacles, they may be susceptible to attack. To deter against attack and ever evolving criminals, the Postal Service in coordination with the Postal Inspection Service will increase security measures for Postal Service mail receptacles. This will include coordination with the Postal Service on the design, purchase, and deployment of new lock technologies, coordination with the Postal Service on strengthening mail collection boxes through the installation of anti-fishing measures, and coordination with the Postal Service to purchase and deploy additional high security collection boxes.



ENHANCE DELIVERY SECURITY



1.2 ENHANCE THE SECURITY OF POSTAL SERVICE DELIVERY VEHICLES

The Postal Inspection Service has worked with the Postal Service to design a new delivery vehicle with integrated enhanced security components that afford increased protection for letter carriers and the mail while in the delivery vehicle. Until these new vehicles are built and fully deployed, the Postal Inspection Service will continue to collaborate with the Postal Service to enhance security for existing delivery vehicles in high postal crime areas, where delivery vehicles are a significant target of the postal crime. Enhanced security for these delivery vehicles will harden the target to mitigate mail theft until the deployment of new delivery vehicles.

1.3 COORDINATE WITH THE POSTAL SERVICE ON ARROW KEY ACCOUNTABILITY

The Arrow key, as a critical access control component for the Postal Service's delivery network, requires a high level of accountability amongst postal employees who have access to and handle them. The Postal Inspection Service will work with the Postal Service on process improvements and technological solutions to improve Arrow key accountability amongst postal employees. The Postal Inspection Service will also share lost/stolen Arrow key data with the U.S. Postal Service Office of the Inspector General and refer employees who fail to maintain accountability for Arrow keys to them for investigation and potential corrective action by the Postal Service. Finally, the Postal Inspection Service will work with the Postal Service to identify electronic key accountability systems to secure Arrow keys and increase Postal Service employee accountability for Arrow keys.



UNITED STATES POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE

2.0

ADVANCE INTELLIGENCE LED INVESTIGATIONS

Intelligence is a key lens through which the Postal Inspection Service will address mail theft and associated financial and violent crimes. The Postal Inspection Service will leverage data sources, internal and external to the Postal Service, and technology to strategically focus investigations, gain investigative insights, and ultimately bring perpetrators of these crimes to justice. The Postal Inspection Service will accomplish this in collaboration with partners ranging from the Postal Service to local, state, and federal law enforcement partners to private sector partners.

2.1 LEVERAGE INTELLIGENCE TO GUIDE INVESTIGATIONS

The Postal Inspection Service will expand its use of criminal intelligence from a variety of sources and expand partnerships to maximize the impact of its investigations. The Postal Inspection Service will further develop our connections within the financial industry to identify new trends, inform investigative techniques and data needs, develop criminal intelligence, and disrupt

illicit money movement, including money mule activity. The Postal Inspection Service will build upon its long running relationships with the financial industry to accomplish this including through the National Cyber Forensic Training Alliance and its own Financial Industry Mail Security Initiative where the Postal Inspection Service, law enforcement partners, and the financial industry come together to share the latest financial crime trends, criminal intelligence, and mitigation strategies.

The Postal Inspection Service will similarly collaborate with our federal, state, and local law enforcement partners, including the Department of Justice (DOJ), the U.S. Postal Service Office of the Inspector General, the U.S. Secret Service, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, among others to identify new and emerging trends, share criminal intelligence, develop investigations, and identify collusive postal employees. These partnerships will act as a force multiplier in tackling mail theft and the disruption of associated criminal activity.



ADVANCE INTELLIGENCE LED INVESTIGATIONS

The Postal Inspection Service will also expand its partnerships to the technology sector and seek increased collaboration and sharing of criminal intelligence and trends with technology companies, including, social media and messaging companies, online marketplaces, Fintech companies, among others to inform those technology companies on the misuse of their platforms, to inform business decisions made by those technology companies involving the disruption of illegal conduct on their platforms, and to overall reduce mail theft related criminal activity.

2.2 COORDINATE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ON THE PROSECUTION OF CRIMINAL ENTERPRISES

The Department of Justice, as the federal prosecutor, is an essential partner in the Postal Inspection Service's enforcement of federal law, including federal statutes



pertinent to mail theft and associated financial and violent crimes. The Postal Inspection Service will engage with DOJ at all levels and share emerging trends on criminal enterprises, criminal intelligence, and knowledge through training of DOJ personnel. The Postal Inspection Service will collaborate with DOJ to target and prioritize investigations of criminal organizations, especially those that commit gun violence and other violent acts against letter carriers, in alignment with DOJ's FY2022-FY2026 Strategic Plan. The Postal Inspection Service will also employ Special United States Attorneys in a strategic manner to complement DOJ's prosecutorial resources, ensuring dedicated attention to postal crimes, including mail theft and violent crimes perpetrated against Postal Service employees.

2.3 DEPLOY AND UTILIZE PERSONNEL STRATEGICALLY TO ADVANCE AND SUPPORT INTELLIGENCE LED INVESTIGATIONS

To meet the demands caused by the significant increase in mail theft and violent crime against Postal Service employees, the Postal Inspection Service will reorient to the way it approaches both problems with our personnel resources. We will ensure resources are strategically assigned including temporarily surging personnel to high Postal crime areas, deploying specially trained Violent Crime Specialists to critical incidents, employing financial crime task force officers, and placing personnel on task forces such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Violent Crimes Task Forces. These personnel allocations will expedite intelligence sharing, advance investigations, and leverage partnerships to bring additional resources to bear on these issues.



UNITED STATES POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE

3.0

DEPLOY COMMUNICATIONS AND INCREASE PREVENTION AWARENESS

Communicating internally with postal employees and externally with the American public is essential to empowering postal employees to protect themselves and the American public to protect their mail and financial security.

Communicating internally with postal employees and externally with the American public about mail theft, and associated financial and violent crimes, is key to raising awareness about these issues and awareness about steps that both postal employees and the public can take to protect themselves. This also brings transparency to the actions that the Postal Inspection Service and Postal Service are taking in response to these issues, including security enhancements and investigative successes.

3.1 ENGAGE IN PREVENTION AWARENESS MESSAGING ON MAIL THEFT AND EMPLOYEE SAFETY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PARTNERS

3.1.1 Increase Employee Safety and Mail Theft Prevention Awareness Amongst Postal Service Employees

The Postal Inspection Service will continue to leverage key relationships at the Postal Service to develop and distribute employee safety and mail theft prevention awareness material through Postal Service channels to Postal Service employees. . The Postal Inspection Service will also collaborate with the Postal Service on partnerships with the Postal Service's unions, such as



DEPLOY COMMUNICATIONS AND INCREASE PREVENTION AWARENESS

the National Association of Letter Carriers, to garner support for prevention efforts that protect Postal Service employees from violent crimes.

3.1.2 Increase mail theft prevention and financial crime prevention awareness amongst Postal Service customers

The Postal Inspection Service will continue to develop and utilize all of its communication channels to distribute mail theft prevention and financial crime prevention awareness materials to Postal Service customers. The Postal Inspection Service will also leverage key relationships at the Postal Service to distribute mail theft and financial crime prevention material through Postal Service channels. The Postal Inspection Service will continue to foster external partnerships, such as with the American Bankers Association, the International Association of Financial Crimes Investigators, and the National Cyber Forensics Training Alliance, and develop new external partnerships to share mail theft and financial crime prevention material with the public.

3.2 ENGAGE IN REGULAR COMMUNICATION WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO RAISE AWARENESS OF POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE AND POSTAL SERVICE EFFORTS TO PROTECT EMPLOYEES AND THE MAIL

Awareness of key stakeholders on actions the Postal Inspection Service and Postal Service have taken and are taking to address mail theft and associated violent and financial crimes is vital to ensuring public trust and public confidence in both the Postal Service and Postal Inspection Service. It is also vital to securing the confidence of all Postal Service employees. The Postal Inspection Service will regularly engage in a transparent manner with key internal and external stakeholders such

as Congress, the American Bankers Association, the Independent Community Bankers of America, the Bank Policy Institute, the Financial Services Sector Coordinating Council, among others, to update them and their constituents on actions that are being undertaken to secure the Postal Service's delivery network, investigative successes, and prevention strategies. The Postal Inspection Service will also seek feedback, when appropriate, from key stakeholders so that constructive feedback may inform the Postal Inspection Service's efforts.

3.3 IMPROVE VICTIM NOTIFICATION AND SUPPORT

Violent crimes against Postal Service employees, including letter carrier robberies and mail theft, have a significant impact on victims, albeit often in different ways. The Postal Inspection Service, as part of its investigative mission, provides notification and support to victims as required by statute and regulation. The Postal Inspection Service will identify ways it can improve its support to victims, especially Postal Service employees who are victims of letter carrier robberies. The Postal Inspection Service will also seek to improve notification and messaging to both known and potential victims of mail theft and related financial crimes.



UNITED STATES POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE

4.0

INVEST IN TOOLS, TECHNOLOGY AND DATA ANALYTICS

The continuous development and application of data analytics to mail theft, and associated financial and violent crime issues, is critical to the identification of real time, emerging trends associated with mail theft and violent crimes against Postal Service employees, the identification of investigative intelligence, and the allocation and deployment of investigative resources. To accomplish this, the Inspection Service will identify relevant mail theft related data sources, organize the data into an efficient environment where applied analytics may be performed, and leverage analytics personnel to apply data analytics techniques and perform continuous data analysis.

4.1 ENHANCE POSTAL SERVICE AND POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE DATA COLLECTION

The Postal Inspection Service will work with the Postal Service to improve the collection of mail theft related

data such as that associated with high volume mail theft complaints and customer mail theft complaints. While the Postal Service and the Postal Inspection Service collect some mail theft related data, the data that is collected should be improved while also facilitating easier reporting for the public.

4.2 LEVERAGE POSTAL SERVICE DATA AND EXTERNAL DATA SOURCES

The Postal Inspection Service will leverage Postal Service data, Postal Inspection Service data and external data sources, such as from financial industry partners. This will allow the Inspection Service to quickly identify emerging trends, develop investigative intelligence, monitor the success of security enhancements, and allocate resources.



INVEST IN TOOLS, TECHNOLOGY AND DATA ANALYTICS



4.3 EXPAND DATA ANALYTICS CAPABILITIES

The Postal Inspection Service will expand its analytics capabilities through several ways including the identification and procurement of new or additional existing analytics tools, and the increase in specialized personnel to support analytics functions and continue to identify needs of the Postal Inspection Service. Expanded data analytics capabilities are required to take full advantage of and realize the full potential of Postal Service data, Postal Inspection Service data, and external data. Expanded data analytics capabilities will result in an increased capacity to perform trend analysis associated with mail theft and associated financial and violent crimes, increased investigative intelligence, increased investigative support, and greater insights.

4.4 INVEST IN TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

The rise in mail theft and violence against postal workers is exacerbated by trends in technology that help bad actors share criminal tactics and strategies, sell stolen financial instruments, encrypt communications, transfer illicit funds, and exploit technology to evade or defeat security measures. This is evidenced by the proliferation of the stolen financial instruments and Arrow keys available for sale on online market places, messaging platforms like Telegram, the use of peer-to-peer payment services, and crypto currencies to transfer fraudulent obtained funds. The Postal Inspection Service will procure and introduce new tools and technologies, including software, hardware, and services, which will enhance capabilities to confront these evolving challenges.



UNITED STATES POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE



5.0

DEPLOY ADVANCED TRAINING

As technology, criminal techniques, and criminals themselves rapidly evolve, so must our training to ensure that personnel are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully investigate mail theft and associated financial and violent crimes. The deployment of advanced training for postal inspectors and other personnel is critical to ensure that the Postal Inspection Service can meet this challenge head-on.

Expanding the cadre of Postal Inspection Service personnel who have advanced training in mail theft investigations, financial crimes investigations, cyber investigations, and violent crimes investigations is a critical component to ensuring the Inspection Service has highly trained personnel who are competent to investigate, prevent, and otherwise address the challenges posed by mail theft and associated financial and violent crimes.

5.1 SPECIALIZED CYBER TRAINING FOR POSTAL INSPECTORS AND OTHER PERSONNEL INVESTIGATING MAIL THEFT RELATED TO SOCIAL MEDIA/INTERNET

Increased training of Postal Inspection Service personnel on cyber based platforms, including both the Clearnet (publicly accessible networks/internet including messaging platforms) and Darknet (anonymous networks including peer to peer connections or through proxy networks), is critical for Postal Inspection Service personnel to be able to conduct investigations of cyber enabled activity associated with mail theft including financial and violent crimes. The Postal Inspection Service will develop and present specialized training, including online undercover training, to its personnel so that they can successfully conduct cyber based investigations involving mail theft and associated crimes. This will also as build a foundation to combat future crime trends.



DEPLOY ADVANCED TRAINING

5.2 **ADVANCED TRAINING FOR POSTAL INSPECTORS AND OTHER PERSONNEL INVESTIGATING LETTER CARRIER ROBBERIES AND VIOLENT ATTACKS ON POSTAL EMPLOYEES**

Robberies of letter carriers and violent attacks on postal employees often are often quick and sometimes without any apparent evidence which would lead to the identification and prosecution of the perpetrator. However, there are advanced investigative techniques specific to robbery investigations which increase the chances of a successful case resolution. The Postal Inspection Service currently delivers, and will continue to deliver to its personnel, training on advance robbery investigative techniques. This training leaves inspectors and analysts to employ these higher-level investigative

techniques to the most complex robbery cases resulting in the likelihood of better investigative outcome.

5.3 **ADVANCED FINANCIAL CRIMES TRAINING**

Mail theft and associated financial and violent crimes have been driven primarily by criminals with a financial motive. These criminals engage in complex schemes to facilitate the theft and laundering of victim funds requiring Postal Inspection Service personnel to understand the many aspects of financial crimes and corresponding investigative techniques. The Postal Inspection Service will deliver advanced financial crimes training to its postal inspectors and other personnel which will provide them with the ability to develop evidence of financial crimes that will result in successful prosecution.



UNITED STATES POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE

CONCLUSION

The Postal Inspection Services is committed to protecting all postal employees, securing the mail, and defending the Postal Service's infrastructure from criminal attack. It is in the Postal Inspection Service's mission to do so and we take that responsibility with great weight. As the Postal Service, its employees, and its infrastructure face increased criminal attack, the Postal Inspection Service reaffirms its commitment to its mission. The Postal Inspection Service and the Postal Service are making, and will continue to make into the future, significant investments of time, capital, personnel, and resources to protect all postal employees and the mail. The Postal Service and the Postal Inspection Service, working with all of their partners, will ensure that the public's trust in the mail endures and postal employees are able to safely perform their essential service to the American public.



UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE

HEADQUARTERS

