

HELP PREVENT MAIL THEFT

How can I better protect my in-coming mail?

- Install an effective (easy, strong, hard to break into) personal locking mailbox and USE THE LOCK.
- Watch your mailbox for deliveries (when possible).
- Pick up your delivered mail as soon as possible from your personal mailbox. Never let it overflow unless you want greedy hands picking your mail off the top.
- If you are away, give a neighbor your mailbox key, and have them pick up and safely store each day's mail deliveries.
- Consider electronic banking and direct deposits to minimize the amount of financial data coming into and going out from your mail box.
- Get your bank to provide you with copies of your cancelled checks. Make sure none were chemically altered to change the payee and amount.
- Review your credit card and bank statements closely and promptly.
- Run a credit check regularly.
- Stay current with local media for news on mail theft.

How can I protect my out-going mail?

- ALWAYS put outgoing mail into an official USPS collection box. They are hard to break into, in a more public setting, and postal employees monitor them at pickup times.
- NEVER put outgoing mail into your own personal mailbox.
- NEVER put up your red flag on your personal mailbox. It's a perfect signal to a mail thief that there is outgoing mail present. If you must put outgoing mail in your box, don't raise the flag; postal personnel will still pick it up, but you won't be advertising that it is there.
- Stay current with local media for news on mail theft.
- Be actively aware of mail theft in your neighborhood; watch for thefts in progress and report them immediately to 911.
- Shred all mail going into your garbage that contains your name, address, or other vital information.

Why should I use a collection box for outgoing mail instead of using my red flag at home?

The red flag is the perfect signal to a mail thief that there is outgoing mail (and probably checks that can be altered) in the mailbox. If you must put outgoing mail in your box, do not use the flag.

Mail placed in a personal mailbox is unsecured, and cannot be protected other than physically watching the mailbox and catching a thief in the act of robbing your mail.

Postal employees monitor USPS collection boxes for mail theft at pick-up times. These collection boxes are hard for thieves to break into, though certainly not impossible (3 collection boxes were stolen in previous years).

Collection boxes are in a much more public setting, so there is a greater chance someone will see the thief and report the crime.

The most secure location to drop off your mail is inside a Post Office. This is of course only available during open hours.

Where are collection boxes located in the Montclair area?

There are currently 17 collection boxes at the following addresses/locations:

- Mountain Boulevard at Colton (tennis courts) (2 drive-up boxes, driver's side - collection times at 2:45 PM and 5:00 PM Monday - Friday and at 2:30 PM on Saturday)
- Mountain Boulevard at Scout (1 drive-up box, passenger side - collection times at 2:45 PM and 5:00 PM Monday - Friday and at 2:30 PM on Saturday)
- Thornhill Drive at 7-Eleven (1 drive-up box, passenger side - collection time at 1:30 PM Monday - Saturday)

- 1 Sheridan Road at Broadway Terrace to the west of 13 (1 box)
- 12079 Broadway Terrace at Merriewood Drive (1 box)
- 1650 Mountain Boulevard at Thornhill Drive (next to the Woman's Cultural Center) (1 box)
- 7403 Skyline next to the Skyline/Snake Fire Station (1 box - collection time at 1:15 PM - Monday - Saturday)
- 6250 Chelton Drive at Darnby (1 box)
- 2051 Mountain Boulevard at LaSalle (Washington Mutual) (3 boxes, one for Express Mail only - collection times for regular mail at 2:00 PM and 5:00 PM Monday - Friday and at 1:00 PM on Saturday)
- Moraga Avenue at LaSalle (Crogans)(1 box - collection times at 2:00 PM and 5:00 PM Monday - Friday and at 1:00 PM on Saturday)
- 1950 Mountain Boulevard at the Montclair USPS branch(5 boxes, two for Express Mail only - collection times for regular mail at 2:45 PM and 5:00 PM Monday - Friday and at 2:30 PM on Saturday)

How do I go about getting a collection box in our neighborhood?

- Determine a proposed site for a collection box.
- Ensure that at least 25 pieces of mail per day would be inserted into a box.
- Prepare a petition from the neighbors (at least 20 signers is recommended).
- Present the petition to the Stationmaster of the Piedmont Post Office who will arrange for an inspection of the proposed location.
- The neighborhood may be asked to participate in the design and construction of a concrete pad for walk-up boxes, and the city may be asked to participate in the design and construction of drive-up locations. Either situation could present barriers to installation.

There are many, many safety and security issues that surround the selection of a proper site for a collection box. Expect that many secondary sites would be examined, and that the original proposed site might be rejected for legitimate concerns. The process is long, and difficult. The results are worth it.