

Protecting Your Mail

Think about what winds up in your mailbox—checks from employers, mutual funds, insurance companies and government benefits programs; statements from banks, credit unions, and credit card companies; a box of new bank checks and outgoing checks to pay bills; forms for a driver's license or passport renewal; applications for new credit cards; mortgage applications listing all your assets and bank account numbers. Imagine what results when these keys to your financial life are stolen.

To keep your paper trail of everyday financial transactions from thieves:

- x Never put outgoing mail in your mailbox. Deposit outgoing mail, especially if it contains checks, into the slot inside the post office or into a U.S. postal collection box.
- x When using a collection box, do not deposit mail after the last pickup of the day.
- x Deposit routine checks—such as payroll, social security, or investment dividends—automatically