



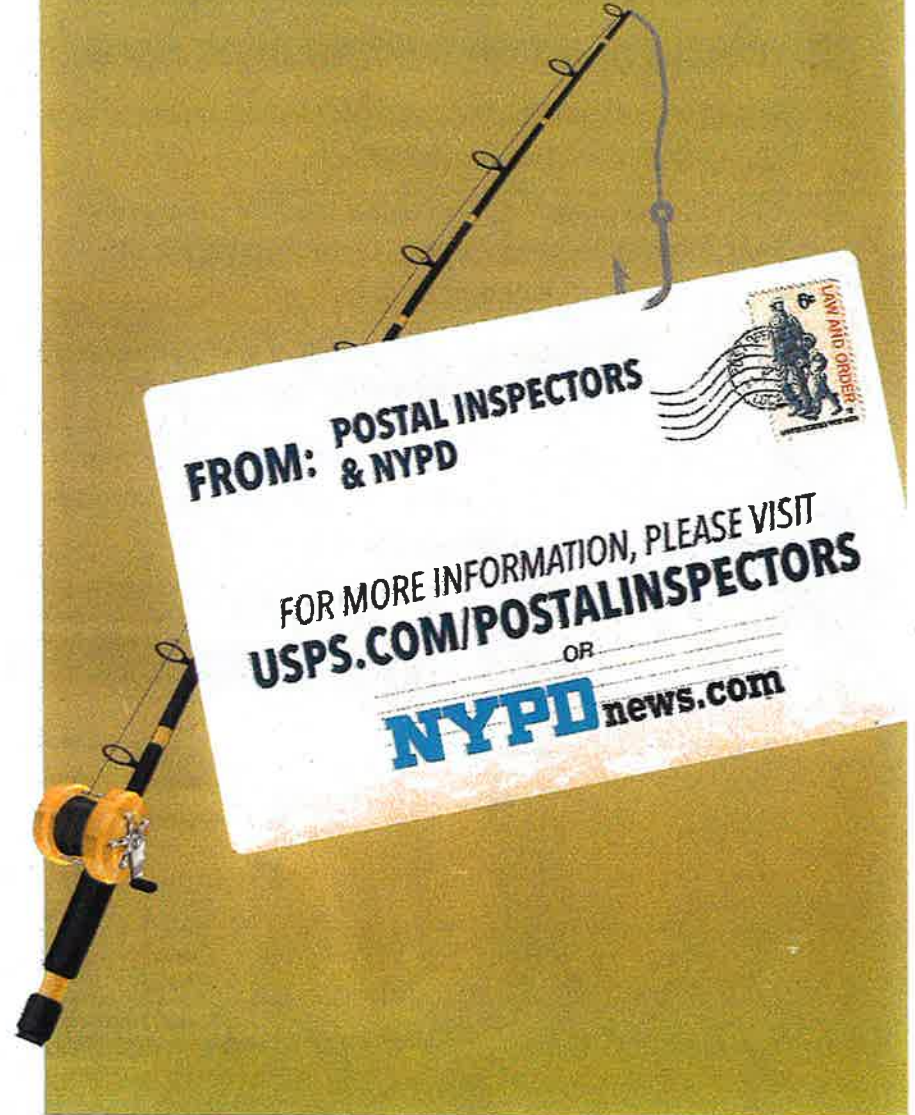
NYPD

New York City Police Department

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NYPD Crime Prevention Division

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



NYPD Crime Prevention Division

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.

