WV Executive Branch Privacy Tip
Holiday Mail

Today's tip is brought to you by the Identity Theft Resource Center (www.idtheftcenter.org)



The U.S. Postal Service estimates it will deliver more than 15 billion pieces of mail this holiday season. Yeah, we're exhausted just thinking about it. Although you might be concerned about your packages getting stolen by so-called "porch pirates," there's actually a lot more damage that can transpire from having your mail stolen. Let's talk mail theft.

Threat: Mail Theft

Do You Need to Worry: You betcha. 400,000 people had their identities stolen last year because of mail theft. See, if your full credit card number is on your bill, thieves can take it and make purchases or change the address on the account. They can even use the bill to pose as the credit card company in order to phish more info from you. Also, checks that you've written to pay bills and left in your mailbox can be a threat because they contain your bank account information. Thieves might also be able to get their hands on your tax form, pay stub, medical bill, or an insurance statement, all of which can contain identifying info.

What Can You Do About It: Monitor your mail - if you always receive a bill on the first of the month, and it doesn't come one month, that's a red flag. Other ways to keep your mail safe is to buy a locking mailbox or get a P.O. box. Always take mail containing sensitive information or checks directly to the post office and don't put your red flag up as it basically signals thieves to come see what's in your mailbox.

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