

Steps to Discover and Protect Against Mailed Church Contribution Check Theft and Recover Funds shared from the Richmond District office

- Install a locked drop-box type mailbox at your premises to replace the standard unlocked mailbox. example: <https://www.lowes.com/pd/Architectural-Mailboxes-12-in-W-x-18-1-in-H-Metal-Black-Post-Mount-Mailbox/999918502>
- Implement internal control procedures for retrieving mail/checks from the locked mailbox such as two staff members retrieving the mail and making control copies of all checks received in the mail. These procedures should be similar to what your church uses to count and deposit weekly plate collections. (this protects staff/members involved and helps rule out internal issues if/when checks go missing in the future)
- Review contributions from regular monthly/quarterly givers to identify any months when a check was not received from the giver. If a check is potentially missing, contact that member and inquire as to whether they mailed a check that month and if the check cleared their bank. If so, then:
 - Have the member notify their bank of probable theft and ask who is the bank of first deposit.
 - Have the member obtain a front and back copy of the check online or from the bank and forward it to the Church Finance Chair or other responsible church staff.
 - Have the member request necessary paperwork from the bank to pursue retrieving funds from receiving bank (ie: notarized affidavit form for church to complete stating they never received the check).
 - Church Finance Chair or other responsible church staff complete and return paperwork required by issuing bank in order to recover funds.
 - Church Finance Chair or representative should contact the local Postmaster. Share with them that Darshelle Thombs, U.S. Postal Inspector, 804-418-6140, DDThombs@uspis.gov is the lead investigator in the Richmond area. If stolen checks are identified, consider sending contribution statements to all regular givers requesting them to confirm that all contributions are accurately listed on the contribution statement and to notify the church of all results.
- Encourage as many givers as possible to use automatic draft, ACH, credit card or other means of making contributions. Note: Payments to churches by members using online bill pay through their bank still in most cases results in checks being printed by your bank and mailed to the church.