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## NYS DCP issues warning & tips for consumers in preventing package thefts in holiday season

Says these measures can help prevent package theft and protect your identity this holiday

Submitted by the New York Department of State's Division of Consumer Protection

For this week's "Tuesday's Tips," the New York Department of State's Division of Consumer Protection (DCP) shares tips on how you can protect yourself from thieves who are trying to steal both your holiday packages and your identity.

Last weekend's holiday shopping, both online and in-store, set record levels for consumer spending, which indicates shopping is showing no signs of slowing down according to the National Retail Federation. The increase can lead to more packages being delivered, which

could also lead to a rise in thefts of packages from porches or other places around one's home.

"The rising popularity and convenience of having goods delivered directly to one's doorstep has unfortunately come with a downside: an increase in package thefts," Secretary of State Robert J. Rodriguez said. "On the heels of Cyber Monday, don't let the Grinch steal your holiday spirit or your packages, and take these preventative measures from the Division of Consumer Protection."

New York State Police Acting Superintendent Dominick Chimento said, "As the holiday shopping season is upon us, and online commerce continues to grow, it presents another opportunity for criminals to steal. Thieves have no boundaries, and this includes snatching packages off porches and driveways. Remember to always track your packages, schedule deliveries when someone will be home, or have a neighbor assist. Be mindful of what you see in and around your neighborhood, and take note of suspicious behavior, vehicles, plates and activity. Report anything out of the ordinary to law enforcement. Partnered together, we can ensure that special gift gets to where it



needs to this year."

Many consumers have already started their holiday online shopping and anticipate deliveries will arrive in time for the holidays. This is a great time to take some measures to prevent package theft and protect your identity.

Follow these tips to prevent package theft and identity theft while checking things off your shopping list:

• **Keep track of your packages.** Package theft peaks during the holiday season, so keeping track of your deliveries is critical to prevent theft. Delivery companies offer real-time tracking and the option to receive customized alerts so you can stay on top of your holiday shipments once they arrive and retrieve your packages as soon as they're delivered.

• **Schedule shipments when someone is home.** Many online retailers and delivery companies allow consumers to schedule specific delivery timeframes. Choose a timeframe when someone will be home to avoid potential theft. When you are home, closely monitor delivery progress via tracking links and grab the shipment as soon as possible to limit the window of vulnerability.

• **Enlist your neighbor's help.** If you're not going to be

home, enlist the help of a trusted neighbor. When possible, have your packages delivered to a location where they can be received in person.

• **Monitor your front door with a security or doorbell camera.** While a camera may not deter thieves, the presence of a camera can help you keep track of when packages are delivered, so you can retrieve them quickly. If a package is stolen, the video recording of the theft can also be shared with police.

• **Take advantage of the "ship to store" option.** Many retailers offer a "ship to store" option. This means that you can order items online and have them sent to a local brick-and-mortar store. You can then pick up your purchase at a time convenient for you.

• **Consider alternative delivery options.** Most delivery companies have alternative pickup and delivery options available. Some include redirecting packages to a local merchant partner or holding packages at their location. Do some research by visiting their websites to explore your options and update your delivery preferences. If you know you're going to be on vacation, request a vacation hold on all shipments.

• **Opt for other services.** If you're doing most of your shopping online, consider alternative services like a package locker, lockbox, or smart lockers.

• **Require delivery confirmation signature.** Consider requesting a signature for packages, especially for high-ticket items. This will ensure your items are not left unattended when delivered. This may require choosing a pricier shipping option.

• **Beware of phishing attempts.** Another common scam this time of year is scammers using phishing emails and text messages to impersonate

delivery companies (e.g., UPS, USPS, FedEx), banking and credit card companies, and other large retailers (e.g., Netflix, PayPal, eBay, Amazon), which often include links to sites attempting to steal your information. Always open a browser and type the company's website address yourself instead of clicking on a link in an email or text message.

Follow the New York Department of State on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and check in every Tuesday for more practical tips that educate and empower New York consumers on a variety of topics. Sign up to receive consumer alerts directly to your email or phone here.

The NYS DCP provides resources and education materials to consumers on product safety, as well as voluntary mediation services between consumers and businesses. The consumer assistance helpline (1-800-697-1220) is available from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays, excluding state holidays. Consumer complaints can be filed at any time at [www.dos.ny.gov/consumer-protection](http://www.dos.ny.gov/consumer-protection).

For more consumer protection tips, follow the DCP on social media at Twitter/X (@NYSCconsumer) and Facebook ([www.facebook.com/nysconsumer](http://www.facebook.com/nysconsumer)).

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