

# Holiday Tips

## Unhappy Holidays and How to Avoid Them—Tips from the U.S. Postal Inspection Service to Keep Your Mail Safe This Season

HOW TO HAVE  
**UNHAPPY HOLIDAYS**

- GET SWINDLED**  
1 Scammers use bogus charities to take money from you and legitimate charities.
- ADVERTISE YOUR VACATION**  
2 A pile of mail and packages tells thieves you aren't home.
- GIVE AWAY CASH**  
3 Cash is untraceable. It's easy to steal and hard to get back.
- START A FIRE**  
4 Certain items should never be mailed because they could start a fire or hurt someone.
- NEIGHBORHOOD (UN)WATCH**  
5 Keep an eye out for the safety of your mail carriers.
- IGNORE YOUR DOORS**  
6 If you don't watch your doors, someone else will.
- KEEP SECRETS**  
7 If you are a victim of a mail crime, report it! Don't keep quiet.
- MESS WITH MAIL**  
8 Mess with mail and you could go to jail.

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### Heeding a few hints can help keep up your holiday spirits.

(NAPS)—Below are some common mistakes people make during the holiday season. These mistakes lead to a lot of frustration for you and pure delight for the bad guys:

**1. Get swindled.** Scammers use bogus charities and underhanded tactics to fraudulently take money from you and away from legitimate charities, especially at the holidays. Before you donate, check out the charity and look carefully at the name. Be sure to make your check payable to the organization and not to an individual. And don't let them pressure you to give money on the spot.

**2. Advertise your vacation.** A visible pile of delivered mail and packages in front of your home is an invitation for the bad guys to help themselves. If you will be out of town or away for an extended period, have your mail held at your local Post Office. Use the HOLD MAIL feature on the USPS.com website or choose the HOLD FOR PICKUP option when shipping.

**3. Give away cash.** Cash is untraceable. It's easy to steal, making it a tempting target for thieves. Send money another way, such as with a check or USPS money order.

**4. Start a fire.** Sending hazardous items can spark a fire in the mail system or cause someone harm. Check to see if your items are prohibited or restricted before going to your local Post Office location.

**5. Neighborhood (un)watch.** Large volumes of mail and packages make postal employees tempting targets for crooks. Keep an eye out for the safety of your mail carriers. If you see something suspicious or someone following your carrier, call the police immediately.

**6. Ignore your doors.** If you don't keep an eye on your door and porch, you can be sure the bad guys will. If you have a camera system, make sure it's focused on capturing activity at your front door or mailbox.

**7. Keep secrets.** When you do not report a mail theft or fraud, the crook gets away with a crime. Report it! Call 1-877-876-2455. You can also report mail crime by visiting [USPIS.gov/Report](https://uspis.gov/Report).

**8. Mess with the mail.** Mess with the mail and you could go to jail.

For more great tips you can use not just during the holidays, but all year long, visit the website at [uspis.gov/holiday-2022](https://uspis.gov/holiday-2022).