Almost 20 billion packages will be delivered through the mail this holiday season. Even at $5 per package, that’s more than $100 billion in value going through the mail—a scale too large and tempting for criminals to ignore.

Online shopping offers a safe and comfortable respite from unruly crowds, but it has its own hazards. Many people, who have gifts shipped to them, have the packages left at their doorsteps by their carriers. These unattended parcels prove irresistible to thieves. Often times the thieves find it too simple to just walk away with your items when no one is looking.

Why do thieves target us during the holidays? In addition to the volume and value of holiday mail, criminals are taking advantage of the perfect winter storm:

- Trucks are overloaded, mail & UPS carriers are overworked and shoppers are overwhelmed, which makes theft easy and attractive.
- Thieves take advantage, not just of our good nature during the holidays, but of how distracted we are.
- Criminals see our generosity of giving as a goldmine waiting to be exploited.

But picking packages off of your doorstep isn’t the only type of crime that skyrockets during December. Thieves don’t just want to steal the gifts inside your packages, they want the identity information that goes along with them: credit card numbers, bank accounts, invoices, even the checks that grandma sends in a holiday card.

How do we protect our mail and packages during the holidays, or any day?

- Install a locking mailbox at your home and retrieve your mail early in the day, before criminals have a chance to steal it.

Mayor Matthes handed out three Points of Light awards on December 18th during the Breath of Aire “Make a Joyful Noise” concert. Recipients were (from top to bottom) Pastor Ray Jennings and wife Sandy Jennings from Christian Life Center; Dr. J. Bayard DuBois, Conductor for the Breath of Aire Choir; and Jennifer Hardison, Executive Director of South Kitsap Helpline.

Special Note
City Hall will be closed on:
- December 25 —Christmas Day
- January 1 —New Year’s Day
• Get a **PO box** during heavy mailing times and use that address for packages, sensitive documents or payments
• Instead of putting outbound packages in your mailbox, **drop them directly at the post office**. Even the blue USPS boxes are commonly emptied by thieves at night.
• Have the package **delivered to a trusted relative, friend or neighbour** that you know will be home.
• Tell relatives to **AVOID sending cash**! It’s too easy to steal and impossible to trace.
• If you must send a physical payment through the mail, use **high security checks**
• Use shipping services that offer tracking so that you can **track your package’s progress**.
• **Insure the items** that you ship and **require a signature** at the other end.
• If you generally aren’t at home when packages are delivered, have them **shipped to your work** so that they don’t sit on your porch for hours.
• If you don’t have a choice, **provide instructions** about where deliveries should be left, in a less visible location.

**Some Additional Holiday Package Safety Tips to Remember:**

• **Lock your car**! I know this is obvious, but it’s one of those reminders I’ve just got to include. Don’t leave windows cracked open either, because even a sliver of space provides just enough leeway to get in the car.
• **Empty the inside of your car of valuables.** Don’t leave anything of value inside your car. It only takes a minute to have a “bad guy” break the window, snatch your possessions and be long gone.
• **Don’t leave packages in the car or trunk.** Avoid returning to your car and placing purchases in the trunk while you resume shopping. Believe it or not, the “bad guys” could be watching for such action. When you leave the vehicle to continue shopping, they will break into your car and snatch your purchases.

Today’s post might not be the most uplifting, but it is critically important to your bottom line and peace of mind. Take these simple steps when sending, receiving or purchasing gifts to avoid the holiday grinches.

If you DO find yourself a victim of a theft, we have made reporting crimes to the Port Orchard Police Department easily accessible at [www.cityofportorchard.us/police](http://www.cityofportorchard.us/police). Just follow the link for **On-line reporting**.

**On behalf of the Port Orchard Police Department,**

**We WISH YOU ALL A SAFE & HAPPY HOLIDAY!**

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**A Real Life Treasure Hunt!**

-An Allan Martin, Treasurer

One fun internet search is signing into Washington State’s Department of Revenue website and searching for your name in unclaimed property!

The state website, [www.claimyourcash.org](http://www.claimyourcash.org), reunites citizens and businesses with their lost property. Examples of unclaimed property include utility and phone company deposits, insurance proceeds, bank accounts, stocks, bonds and mutual funds, safe deposit box contents, uncashed checks, such as payroll, insurance payments, or travelers’ checks. Are you thinking back about that check you never cashed or Aunt Betty’s long ago safety deposit box?

The Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 63.29 Uniform Unclaimed Property Act defines rules for entities that must report unclaimed or abandon property, such as banking and financial organizations, credit unions, and investment companies. Corporations, joint stock companies, insurance companies, utilities and legal entities including the state, county, and city governments, political subdivisions and public authorities, estates, and trusts.

Each year millions of dollars of unclaimed property is turned over to the Department of Revenue to be claimed by the rightful owner. The Department of Revenue returned a record $66 million to 157,000 claimants in 2013. Wow, now that’s some real moolah!

So why not give it a try? Go to [www.claimyourcash.org](http://www.claimyourcash.org) and begin your real life treasure hunt, and don’t forget about the contents of that long ago lock box of Aunt Betty’s!

Unclaimed property does **not** include real estate, vehicles, and most other physical property.
What is Public Works?
-Mark Dorsey, P.E., Public Works Director

When it comes to public works, one size definitely does not fit all, so defining the term becomes problematic. Even the American Public Works Association (APWA) members have trouble arriving at a common definition. Because of the multi-faceted, ever-evolving nature of public works, we may never arrive at a final definition but, for now, the following definition seems appropriate:

“Public works is the combination of physical assets, management practices, policies, and personnel necessary for government to provide and sustain structures and services essential to the welfare and acceptable quality of life for its citizens.”

Various public works models:
In the real world there is no one, ideal structure for a public works operation. Even though some public works services are considered “must haves” in every community, they may not be readily identified on a city organizational chart, or delivered in the same way, or to the same level, from one community to the next. In fact, some municipalities may not even have a department named public works. Although some functions are not common to every community, each of them will have such things as water, utilities, and trash collection—unquestionably. What IS in question is by whom they are delivered. The traditional concept of public works is that governmental units provide the services, own the facilities, and are usually funded through taxation. However, the situation often is not that clear-cut today, and other models also exist, which include publicly owned corporations and partial outsourcing. It’s not uncommon for the private sector to be involved in delivering public works services as well. For instance, some communities may own a fleet of trash collection vehicles, but other communities will contract out that service to private companies. It’s also common for a municipal engineering division to plan and design large construction projects but to contract out the actual construction work.

Another public works model—complete outsourcing or contracting out with a privately owned corporation—is somewhat more controversial and considered “borderline” on whether it actually fits the definition of government provision of public works services. Although the services are delivered on behalf of government, the high degree of private sector control and/or risk tends to discount them as valid public works in some people’s consideration. Quite often, public utilities—such as water, gas, electricity, telephone, mass transportation, and communication facilities—are not owned and operated by a government agency. However, even if utilities are not owned by a governmental unit, they still are said to be “affected with a public interest” and are subject to a degree of government regulation from which other businesses are exempt. In such situations, the utilities often operate as a monopoly in their markets, under a license or franchise, and are required to render adequate service at reasonable prices to all who apply for the service. Although it is not always feasible or cost effective for a municipality to own utilities, the absence of these essential services would be injurious to public health and welfare. Therefore, whether publicly or privately owned, the services themselves still can be considered public works.

The United States has approximately 19,400 municipalities of varying sizes, and Canada is home to nearly 3,700 more. In each community, whatever its size, there are needs common to all human beings that must be met through the provision of public works services. These needs are met on a daily basis by visionary, values-driven, and hardworking men and women who provide and sustain public works services in the best interests of their communities.

Specific to the City of Port Orchard, 2013 was again a very busy year in both the routine maintenance and operation of the City’s water, sanitary sewer and storm drainage utilities, streets, parks and facilities, but also in capital improvement projects. The City’s Public Works Department is currently in the process of completing project closeout paperwork and tying up contracting loose ends on the many of the projects completed in 2013 as well as preparing for a busy 2014. A List of capital projects for 2014 will be published in the February 2014 Newsletter.
Year in Review—2013 Projects

Bay Street Pedestrian Path Segment 5

Bay Street Pedestrian Path Segment 2 in partnership with the Port of Bremerton

Sidney Street—End Compass Rose

Cedar Heights Junior High Sidewalks
In partnership with SKSD

Well No. 9

Dekalb Pier Phase 1

Waterstreet Boat Launch
In partnership with the Port of Bremerton