

"Porch pirates" are unfortunately more common than ever, taking advantage of the fact that online shopping and at-home deliveries are at an all-time high. Even though mail theft is a federal crime, it's often tempting and easy for petty criminals to snatch a package off of a doorstep. Indeed, more than 25 million people have their deliveries stolen each year. *Don't be one of them.*

Many thieves are opportunists, on the hunt for easy targets. Therefore, one of the most effective ways to prevent package theft is to not allow packages to sit outside for too long.

In addition, check the services offered by the delivery companies. For example, [UPS](#) offers a service that allows you to pick the date and time when a package will be delivered, for an additional fee, so you can be sure you will be home. Packages can also be held at UPS Stores and other locations. Similarly, [FedEx](#) packages can be held at a local FedEx office or a Walgreens store or other locations. The [U.S. Postal Service](#) can also hold your packages or redirect delivery.

- **Have your packages delivered elsewhere**, such as **Caltech's Shipping and Receiving address**, an Amazon delivery site, P.O. Box, or FedEx/UPS location. It's well worth the minor inconvenience to ensure your packages are safe.
- **Request that deliveries require a signature.** With carriers like FedEx or UPS, you can often set this preference using your customer account, even if the package is already on its way. For USPS deliveries, you will need to arrange for a signature ahead of time. Check the requirements of your carrier.
- **Subscribe to delivery alerts.** All of the major delivery services offer some kind of notification service for package updates. Opt in to receive the most up-to-date information available.
- **Keep the area around your front porch clear and visible.** This is a burglary prevention tip often shared by police officers. Thieves want to be able to get to and from your doorstep undetected. When they are likely to be seen, they are more likely to choose another target.
- **Request nondescript packaging.** When possible, ask senders not to announce where the package is coming from, especially if it is from a high-end store. Sometimes this is possible through a gift shipping option.

If you see suspicious activity please contact Caltech Security at x5000 immediately. If you live off campus notify your local police department.

Do not confront anyone on campus. Your safety is our primary concern. Items can be replaced. **DO NOT** attempt to contact or confront anyone you suspect is engaging in suspicious or criminal activity.