



PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE

COMMUNITY AWARENESS BULLETIN

CAB 006-18

December 10, 2018

PROTECTING HOLIDAY PACKAGES

Experts are predicting \$128 - \$134 billion will be spent shopping online from 11/01/2018 until 01/31/2019, which is an increase of about 22 percent from last year's numbers.¹ As online shopping increases, so do thefts of packages from front porches.² According to Consumer Affairs, "an estimated 23 million Americans had packages stolen from their porch last year alone."³ The thefts have increased annually and there are no signs of this trend slowing. Thieves commonly drive through neighborhoods or walk through apartment complexes looking for delivered packages to steal. In some cases, criminals have followed delivery trucks and have stolen delivered packages left on porches or doorsteps as soon as the truck pulled away.

Some companies are taking on these criminals by developing programs to prevent these incidents. Amazon recently tested a new service to its Prime members called Amazon Key. The service will allow delivery drivers to place packages inside the customer's home when they are not there. The service requires the Prime member to purchase a kit that starts at \$250 and includes an Amazon security camera, the Cloud Cam, and a compatible smart lock. When a customer processes their order, they can select the "in-home" option. After the driver arrives at the location, Amazon verifies the address and delivery time and allows him or her into your home. You can watch from your phone as the camera records the entire delivery. Amazon will remotely unlock the door once the delivery driver verifies the package and address. The delivery driver will not have the access code to the lock on the door. The service is originally going to be available in 37 cities, but the company hopes to expand the program. Walmart also announced they are testing a similar service to their customers.⁴⁵



Recommendations to Avoid Porch Thefts

Remember, you have options to help protect your purchases and deliveries. Before you click ship and send online deliveries straight to your home, think about when the package will be delivered and where you will be at the time. You should also consider how long the package will sit outside in plain sight; whether neighbors will be home at the time of delivery; and whether there is an alternate location that is safe for you to receive your package. Below are some recommendations to help avoid your parcels from being stolen by an opportunistic criminal.^{6,7,8}

- Consider the use of Smart Package Lockers (if available)
- Have your packages delivered to your workplace (if permitted)
- Install a smart security camera at your front door
- Add a smart doorbell
- Upgrade your mailbox to one with a lock
- Require a signature upon delivery
- Ask for a tracking number so you can re-route or re-schedule a delivery
- Require a vacation package hold
- Have packages delivered to a local UPS Store
- Put inside lights and radios on timers to give the appearance someone is home
- Get a package guard for your delivery
 - This is a Frisbee size device that is attached to your porch that notifies you when a package is delivered and has an alarm to protect your package until you or someone you know can safely pick up your delivery
- Request the packages be delivered to a retail store for pickup
- If you know the date and approximate time of a package delivery, ask a neighbor to pick it up for you
- Leave a note requesting your delivery be placed outback or in a special location

Call 9-1-1 if you see something suspicious and report the information to authorities with as much detail as possible.



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- ¹ Berthene, A. (2018, September 19). Online sales may increase 22% for the 2018 holiday season. *Digital Commerce 360*. Retrieved 12/06/2018 from <https://www.digitalcommerce360.com/2018/09/19/online-sales-may-increase-22-for-the-2018-holiday-season/>.
- ² Harte, T. (2017, November 16). Seven tips to protect packages from holiday porch thefts. *Fox 59*. Retrieved 12/06/2018 from <http://fox59.com/2017/11/16/seven-tips-to-protect-packages-from-holiday-porch-thefts/>.
- ³ Olivia. (2016, October 11). 8 best guides to avoid getting your packages stolen during holiday. *Reolink*. Retrieved 12/06/2018 from <https://reolink.com/how-to-prevent-package-from-being-stolen-during-holiday/>.
- ⁴ Disis, J. (2017, October 25). Amazon will let delivery people inside your house. *CNN*. Retrieved 12/06/2018 from <http://money.cnn.com/2017/10/25/technology/business/amazon-key-delivery/index.html>.
- ⁵ Amazon. (2018). Amazon Key Smart Lock Kit. Amazon. Retrieved 12/08/2018 from <https://www.amazon.com/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=202179650>.
- ⁶ Package Guard. (2017). *Package Guard*. Retrieved 12/06/2018 from <https://www.thepackageguard.com/>
- ⁷ Moiuszko, S. (2016, December 2). 7 Ways to avoid package theft during the Holidays. *NBC 4*. Retrieved 12/06/2018 from <https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/7-Ways-to-Avoid-Package-Theft-During-the-Holidays-404301116.html>.
- ⁸ Edwards, R. (2018, October 3). Security Moves that Keep your Amazon Prime Packages Safe. *Safewise*. Retrieved 12/08/2018 from <https://www.safewise.com/blog/security-moves-keep-amazon-prime-packages-safe/>.