

Keeping the mail safe

As a society, we are facing a new breed of criminals. Crime, especially as it relates to identity theft, is highly organized, well-financed and heavily reliant on technology that is inexpensive and readily available. Theft of mail has increased in recent years because of the growing street value of confidential personal information.



Canada Post has a moral and legal obligation to deliver Canadians' mail safely and securely. The company must therefore do everything it takes to be aware of emerging trends in criminal activity and do whatever it takes to make sure the mail is not intercepted by the wrong people.

How big is the problem?

Canada Post delivered 11 billion pieces of mail last year. Approximately 10,000 of those pieces were reported stolen. However, based on the damage inflicted to the company's delivery receptacles, the company knows that more mail is stolen than is actually reported. The fact that the mail is delivered securely most of the time **does not excuse** the times when it does go missing.

What is Canada Post doing to make the mail more secure?

1. Fortifying Street Furniture (Mailboxes)

Incidents of vandalism and break-ins to street furniture have increased in recent years. Canada Post has taken a hard look at equipment to find ways to improve reliability from a security perspective.

- The company is replacing more than 647,000 master locks on its receptacles, including Street Letter Boxes, Community Mailboxes, privately-owned apartment-style mailboxes and mailroom doors, with new high security locks that have the distinct advantage of being non-forgable. To date, in the Metro Vancouver area of British Columbia alone, the company has installed some 70,000 of these high security locks. The completion date for installation nation-wide is 2010; in high-crime areas, however, locks are being retrofitted immediately.
- In addition, 500 anti-pry devices are currently being tested at Community Mailbox sites in high-risk areas of British Columbia. If the pilot proves successful, the devices will be installed at sites across the country.
- All new Community Mailboxes deployed across the country feature the new high security locks.
- Customers using Community Mailboxes hold the only key to their individual compartments. Keys to deliver to Community Mailboxes are in the control of the Canada Post delivery agent at all times or secured at the depot.
- A computerized key management system tracks all keys used by Canada Post delivery agents. If a delivery agent loses a key, the key and the locks it opens should be replaced the same day. Furthermore, each key only opens a limited number of locks in a specific area and there is no way for someone outside Canada Post to match the key to a specific lock.

2. Security of the workforce

Canada Post's 72,000 employees work diligently to move 40 million pieces of mail every workday and for them, security starts at the company's doorstep. Anyone entering a Canada Post facility will experience first-hand the importance the company places on security.

- Only employees or contractors with valid security passes can access Canada Post's major facilities. Security policy and processes require that all potential employees are subject to both a criminal record check and a credit check before being hired.
- New employees receive Security Awareness Training.
- All visitors to Canada Post's sorting and delivery facilities are greeted by a security official and/or Canada Post employees. Visitors require proof of identification before they can be admitted into the facility and are to be escorted at all times when they are on the premises.
- Perimeter cameras mounted in strategic locations allow the company's security force to monitor access points at major facilities continuously.

Should employees notice any suspicious activities either at a work location or while performing their duties outside Canada Post's facilities, they are encouraged to report it to a supervisor immediately, a representative of Security and Investigation Services or Human Resources, or to the police. Furthermore, a whistleblower hotline managed by an outside company specialized in the provision of anonymous feedback allows them to report suspected theft, mail tampering or any other suspicious conduct.

3. Working with customers

Canada Post's commercial customers believe security of the mail is essential as they transport products to their own customers.

Canada Post initiated the Customer Risk Management Forum comprising the company's major customers. Through this forum, customers receive information and advice on best practices to prepare their mail to minimize risks.

As a result of input from its customers, many of Canada Post's products and services include "best in class" safety features. For example:

- For highly sensitive documents, customers can use registered mail, Xpresspost or Priority Next A.M., which offer signature on delivery. These items are scanned throughout the sorting and delivery process to better track their location within Canada Post's facilities.
- Customers who use Canada Post's online Change of Address Notification service receive a confirmation card at their current address before the redirection to their new address comes into effect.
- Canada Post offers several electronic services such as *epost* and *PosteCS* that use sophisticated encryption technology. Canada Post's Electronic Postmark certifies that items sent using these services have not been altered, modified, or tampered with during delivery.

4. Canada Post's dedicated security force

Canada Post has a whole department, Security and Investigation Services (S&IS), dedicated to security and criminal investigations. S&IS is mandated under the Canada Post Corporation Act to conduct investigations with respect to threats against the mail. The company's 80 postal inspectors are highly trained experts in security; in fact, many are former police officers. This security force works closely with other postal administrations in order to stay ahead of emerging trends in criminal activity.

5. Partnerships with law enforcement agencies

Canada Post partners with all levels of law enforcement agencies (municipal, provincial and the RCMP) to investigate crime and stay ahead of the trends. Canada Post consults with law enforcement agencies to make its processes more secure.

6. Continuously improving processes

Canada Post incorporates security considerations into every aspect of mail collection, processing and delivery.

Processes and procedures are an essential component of the company's efforts to protect the sanctity of the mail. Everyone is expected to follow them. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary measures up to and including dismissal.

Employees and contractors who work in the company's facilities are well trained and regularly reminded of appropriate procedures. For example:

- Mail must never be left unattended unless it is secured.
- When an employee delivers a package that doesn't fit in a mailbox, delivery personnel must leave a card to either identify the safe location where the package was left or the post office where it can be picked up with the information recorded in Canada Post's tracking system.
- When the customer picks a package up at a retail outlet, counter personnel are required to ask for government-issued photo ID showing the same name and address as that on the package. Customers may ask someone else to pick up the package for them; however, this person must show photo ID **and** a letter of authorization from the customer.

Extra precautions have also been implemented to protect mail the company delivers in high risk areas. For example, the letter carrier keeps the mail at all times; mail is never left unattended. Also, the company collects the mail more frequently in these areas.

Many other measures support Canada Post's efforts to ensure that mail reaches its destination safely. They include the following:

- The company operates a National Control Centre (on a 24 hour/365 day basis) that monitors daily operations and escalates critical situations involving the efficient, timely and safe movement of customers' mail from coast to coast to coast, across all transportation modes (air, rail, highways, ferries) and across all delivery modes.
- Major transportation highway trailers are security sealed from the moment they leave one facility until they arrive at another.
- Most major highway service transportation suppliers employ GPS to track locations of their fleet.
- Containers to transport mail in aircraft (air cans) are sealed from tarmac to tarmac.
- Canada Post's dedicated air freighter network is governed by Transport Canada regulations.
- The company is increasing scanning and tracking capabilities through the deployment of scanning devices within the delivery force and through the installation of additional technology in mail processing facilities.
- All major processing facilities are equipped with radio frequency activators to detect radio frequency-equipped packages.

Canada Post has worked with its commercial customers to implement new technological processes such as imaging and bar codes to track the mail from the time it is received to when it is delivered.

The company is currently working on other initiatives that will be introduced at a later date. Examples of such initiatives include:

- The implementation of a system to track lettermail using barcodes on envelopes;
- The introduction of new sophisticated technology that will better track mail containing sensitive documents, such as passport applications.

Trusting Canada Post

For more than 150 years, Canada Post has been the country's trusted delivery agent. The confidence Canadians have in this company depends on its ability to securely deliver the billions of pieces of mail customers hand over to Canada Post each year. In fact, this trust factor is a very strong pillar in the company's brand reputation.

Any incident that could compromise that trust is unacceptable; unacceptable to the client, of course, but equally unacceptable to Canada Post. The company understands how much its customers value their personal information. The privacy of the message being delivered is the foundation of every postal system and is embedded in modern democratic societies as a fundamental right.