

A photograph of a front porch. On the left is a brick wall with a wicker basket filled with firewood. To the right is a blue door with a brass handle and a decorative glass window. A cardboard box with a shipping label is leaning against the door. The text "Avoiding Porch Pirates" is written in a white script font, and "Holiday Delivery Tips for Residents" is written in a white sans-serif font below it.

Avoiding Porch Pirates

Holiday Delivery Tips for Residents

Adobe reported that last year, Americans spent close to 14 billion dollars online on Black Friday and Cyber Monday alone. These sales do not even account for half of the online sales for the holiday season. Online shopping is all about convenience. A shopper could easily find, review and purchase the perfect item in less than one minute, with a promise that that item will arrive at the shopper's doorstep just days later. In the weeks leading up to the holidays, it takes longer to find a parking space in the mall than it does to tackle your entire shopping list online.

But, shoppers are not the only ones who enjoy these conveniences. The bad guys have profited too. Thieves follow delivery trucks to scoop up packages left unattended on doorsteps. Amateur would-be criminals see the packages and the desire to snatch the unknown contents can be just too tempting. In fact, millions of packages are stolen from American doorsteps every year.

Some homeowners associations have proactively attempted to address this issue by installing package delivery stations in the community. Package "lockers" can be installed to provide a secure place for deliveries. More sophisticated stations include the ability to alert residents about package deliveries via a phone app. But, be forewarned! Not all residents pick up their packages right away and some residents may abuse the privilege with excessive amounts of deliveries. Rules may be necessary to ensure locker space for everyone.

However, many homeowners associations are short on open space or money. One solution is to establish architectural guidelines for homeowner-installed lockboxes at the doorsteps. These lockboxes allow delivery personnel to leave packages inside a locked container.

Delivery Tips

Minimal steps, such as providing tips to the residents, may curb some criminal activity. Here are some tips to include in your next newsletter:

- 1 Have packages delivered to your place of business or somewhere that a person can receive the package, like a local UPS store or Amazon lockers.
- 2 Install a doorbell camera and alert system, like Ring, to discourage thieves. Some systems capture video of the thief and allow the resident to set off an alarm instantly if the video feed shows a crime in progress.
- 3 Consider delivery services that authorize the delivery person to enter into the home and leave the package inside.
- 4 Consider requiring a signature for delivery of packages.
- 5 Track the delivery so you can retrieve your package as soon as possible.
- 6 Enlist the help of neighbors by asking a neighbor that is home during the day to be your package recipient or to retrieve any packages that have been delivered to your home.

*Why do Pirates not do well in homeowners associations?
Because they never read their CC and arrrs.*

—Misty Thomas