

# **Stop, thief! How to prevent porch pirates this holiday season**

*By Lauren Fielder on Dec 18, 2019*

With the ease and convenience of online shopping, more people are choosing to have packages delivered directly to their homes. But the spike in deliveries leading up to the holidays means purchases may be vulnerable to theft before they even make it through the front door.

Package theft has become rampant in recent years, with more than 1.7 million packages going missing or being stolen every day across the U.S., according to the *New York Times*. Earlier this year, Aurora, Ill.-based packaging business Shorr conducted a survey of 1,052 adults 18 and older living in the U.S. and found that 24% of respondents had been victims of package theft.

Measures taken by those surveyed to prevent package theft included adjusting their plans to be at home when a package is delivered (78%), sending packages to another address (64%), and changing their online purchasing habits around the holidays (58%). Some homeowners have gotten creative when fighting back against so-called “porch pirates” by setting up decoy packages filled with garbage, used diapers, and dog poop, or engineering a glitter bomb.

If residents in your community association have been frequent targets of package theft, here are some tips to deter thieves and ensure packages are kept safe:

- **Schedule deliveries.** When purchasing expensive items such as electronics, arrange for deliveries to be made when you are home. About 45% of homeowners surveyed by Shorr said that they scheduled deliveries to prevent package theft.

- **Notify a relative or a neighbor when you are expecting a package.** If you can't be home when a package is delivered, have a family member or a trusted neighbor be on the lookout. You also may want to give them permission to grab your package and hold it until you arrive.
- **Install doorbell cameras or other security systems.** Recording devices can provide evidence of package theft to bring to your association's board and notify police. Shorr's report notes that 31% of respondents installed video cameras after having packages stolen. Check your association's rules and regulations on these devices before installing them.
- **Opt for package pickup.** Many delivery companies have lockers and pickup points in numerous retail locations that have extended hours, allowing you to collect your package at your convenience.

Preventing package theft is a community effort. Encourage your neighbors to be on alert and report any incidents to the association board and police.

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