



OFFICIAL MEDIA RELEASE KENT COUNTY SHERIFF DEPARTMENT



Date: May 2, 2018

Complaint Number: 18-112783

Type of Incident: Fraud

Reporting Officer: Detective Randy Haverkamp

Supervisor Approval: Sgt. Ben Cammenga

On 03/15/2018 a suspicious vehicle in Ada Township was reported to the Kent County Sheriff's Department. The caller reported a male and female were going through mailboxes and taking mail. As time progressed, the Kent County Sheriff's Department, Lowell Police Department, and several agencies in eastern Michigan began receiving numerous reports of identity theft. In Kent County alone, approximately 35 victims have been identified. The suspects were stealing the victim's identities, opening fraudulent credit card accounts in their name, and then stealing the cards from the victim's mailboxes when the cards were delivered. The suspects often target neighborhoods with 'banks' of mailboxes together. There are two credit card companies recently seen with these fraudulent credit cards. They are HSBC Bank and State Farm Bank.

Every day, the U.S. Postal Service safely and efficiently delivers millions of checks, money orders, credit cards, and merchandise. Unfortunately, such items are also attractive to thieves. That's why local law enforcement and Postal Inspectors across the country are at work to protect your mail. But with deliveries to more than 150 million addresses, they can't do the job alone. Here's what you can do to protect your mail from thieves: Don't let incoming or outgoing mail sit in your mailbox. Promptly remove mail from your mailbox after delivery, especially if you're expecting checks, credit cards, or other negotiable items. If you won't be home when the items are expected, ask a trusted neighbor to pick up your mail. Don't leave your mail unattended for extended periods. Have your Post Office hold your mail while you're away. If you don't receive a check or other valuable mail you're expecting contact the issuing agency. If you change your address, immediately notify your Post Office and anyone with whom you do business via the mail. Hand outgoing mail to your letter carrier, or mail it at the Post Office, an official blue USPS collection box on the street, or a secure receptacle at your place of business. If you have concerns about security in your neighborhood, consider installing a lockable mailbox or obtaining PO Box service from your local Post Office. If you see a mail thief at work, call police immediately, then report it to Postal Inspectors. If you believe your mail was stolen, report it immediately by submitting an online complaint at postalinspectors.uspis.gov or calling 877-876-2455.

The Kent County Sheriff Department is urging citizens to monitor their credit reports and file a report if suspicious activity is found, especially involving HSBC Bank and State Farm Bank. Citizens are also encouraged to contact their Police Department immediately if any suspicious activity is seen around mailboxes.

If you have any information regarding this incident, please contact the Kent County Sheriff's Department at 616-632-6100.