

Amazon & Porch Pirates - What You Need To Know

December 6, 2024 - The holiday season is upon us, and millions of Americans are enjoying the convenience of online shopping. After all, who wants to fight the traffic and the crowds by going to a mall? Online shopping is not only convenient, but oftentimes the deals that are offered online are better than those that you can find in the store. But there are some downsides to it. Porch Pirates are one of the biggest.

There's a pretty good chance that if you are shopping online you're doing some, or all of it at Amazon. After all, it's the largest online shopping destination for Americans. Amazon trucks can be seen roaming the roads all over the country. Unfortunately those trucks have also become a beacon for porch pirates.

When a package is dropped at your front door, and visible from the street, it's an inviting Target for thieves. But Amazon is aware of this and they do offer some tools in order to help prevent that. One of the most important is delivery instructions.

As an Amazon customer, you can set up delivery instructions which their drivers are supposed to follow every time they make a delivery. And if they don't follow those instructions, you can complain. Delivery instructions can also help you get a refund if you have an item that's stolen and the driver didn't follow the instructions.

I experienced this personally last year, when a package was dropped on my front doorstep and the instructions weren't followed. I filed a complaint and then called Amazon's customer service. There was absolutely no argument about getting my item replaced. I'm not sure that would have been the case if I hadn't had delivery instructions saved on my profile. The agent I was speaking to told me that the driver's decision not to follow the instructions was the reason that I was getting such quick action.

But shoppers need to know that delivery instructions will not be followed on all Amazon orders. That's because not all Amazon orders are shipped via Amazon drivers. Amazon also uses the United States Post Office to deliver many of its packages and USPS drivers don't have access to these instructions.

Complicating matters further, when an order is shipped via the Postal Service, Amazon doesn't provide you away to complain about the delivery in their app. You have to call their customer service.

Even so, we strongly recommend that you had delivery instructions to your profile. It's a way to help protect yourself, both from thieves and from their aftermath.

We also recommend that if you shop at other online retailers, you provide delivery instructions if they allow it.

by Jim Malmberg

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