

Holiday Crime & Safety Tips

If You Are Traveling

- ❖ Get an automatic timer for your lights.
- ❖ Ask a neighbor to watch your home, shovel snow, and park in the driveway from time to time.
- ❖ Don't forget to have mail and newspaper delivery stopped. If it piles up, it's a sure sign you're gone.

If You Are Out for the Evening

Turn on lights and a radio or TV so it looks like someone's home. Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave, even if it's just for a few minutes. Don't display gifts where they can be seen from outside.

If You Are Shopping

- ❖ Stay alert and be aware of what's going on around you.
- ❖ Park in a well-lighted space, and be sure to lock the car, close the windows, and hide shopping bags and gifts in the trunk.
- ❖ Avoid carrying large amounts of cash; pay with a check or credit card whenever possible.
- ❖ Deter pickpockets and purse-snatchers. Don't overburden yourself with packages. Be extra careful with purses and wallets. Carry a purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps. Put a wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket.
- ❖ Shopping with kids? Teach them to go to a store clerk or security guard if you get separated.

Protect Your Vehicle

Loading up on all those gifts is a sign of progress in the holiday shopping. But if those packages are left out in the open after they're in the car, your car has become a likely target for thieves. Remember the old cliché "Out of sight, out of mind?" The same idea applies to items in your car. Always lock your vehicle and store all items out of sight. Help prevent your vehicle from being stolen by always locking your car and using anti-theft devices and although it's cold, never leave your vehicle running while you run inside your home or a store—even if for only a minute or two.

If a Stranger Comes to the Door

Criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts, so be cautious when accepting a package. Ask for identification and find out how the funds will be used. If you aren't satisfied, don't give. Help a charitable organization you know and like instead.

After You've Opened the Gifts

Avoid becoming an easy target for post-holiday burglars by not leaving boxes for new electronics and other items at garbage pick-up locations for several days at a time. Instead, break down boxes you are throwing out, put them in garbage bags and place them inside a trash can in a garage until the evening before your regular garbage pick-up. Some burglars actually look inside garbage cans for evidence of holiday gifts.

Take a Holiday Inventory

The holidays are a good time to update—or create—your home inventory. Take photos or make videos of items, and list descriptions and serial numbers. If your home is burglarized, having a detailed inventory can help identify stolen items and make insurance claims easier to file.

Enjoy the Season!

Last but not least, don't let holiday stress get the best of your holiday spirit. Make time to get together with family, friends, and neighbors. And think about reaching out in the spirit of the season and helping someone who's less fortunate or lonely.