

Holiday Crime Prevention Tips

At Home:

- Keep the outside of your home well lit with doors locked and curtains closed
- Don't display gifts beneath the Christmas tree which can be seen from windows or doors
- After the holidays, don't advertise gifts received by the boxes left for garbage collection. Destroy boxes and place in a sealed, non-clear garbage bag

While Shopping:

- Stay alert to your surroundings and the people around you
- Shop with a friend, there is safety in numbers
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash
- Pay for purchases with a check, credit or debit card
- If possible, carry only your driver's license, personal checks or necessary credit or debit cards
- If you must carry a purse, do not wrap the straps around your arms or shoulders, carry a clutch purse tightly under your arm or wear a fanny pack
- Do not carry a wallet in a back pocket, it should be placed in a front pocket of your pants for safety
- Be alert that crooks look for the "high dollar" shopping bags with your purchases. When possible, slip bags/purchases in a plain nondescript bag
- Watch purchases while eating in mall food courts; bags can easily be switched or taken
- Educate your children about what to do if they are lost as well as "Stranger Danger"
- Don't overburden yourself with too many packages, use store's package pick-up
- Have your car keys ready in hand before leaving the store
- If you do return to your vehicle to unload purchases, place them in the trunk of the vehicle
- Try not to shop until the store closes, remember, fewer people are present at this time
- Don't resist if someone tries to take any of your belongings. Don't chase someone who robs you, they may have a weapon. Instead, call 911

While in Your Car/Traveling:

- Shop early and leave early to avoid evening darkness
- Park in a high visibility area and check for lighting in cash you leave during hours of darkness
- If at all possible, try not to park next to a vehicle with dark tinted windows
- Prior to arriving at the shopping center, lock all your valuables in the trunk of your vehicle
- Leave the store with others, not alone
- Ask security to escort you to your vehicle if you feel uncomfortable
- Walk briskly, confidently and directly through the parking lot. Be cautious of people handing out fliers or asking questions in the parking area
- Watch for people who may be following you. This can occur inside as well as outside. If you suspect someone is following you, report it to security immediately
- When you return to your vehicle, scan the interior of your car to be sure no one is hiding inside
- Do not leave your purse, wallet or cell phone in plain view
- Lock your vehicle and put up your windows even while you are driving
- If you go to an automatic teller machine (ATM) for cash, check for people around and make sure it is well lit and in a safe location
- Drive defensively. Traffic is heavier during the holidays, drivers may also have indulged in too much holiday spirits