

Holiday Crime Prevention Tips

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.

In the parking lot

- Shop early and leave early to avoid evening darkness
- Park in a high visibility area and check for lighting in case you leave during hours of darkness
- If at all possible, try not 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 following you, report it to security immediately.

At home

- Keep the outside of your home well lit with doors locked and window 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 the garbage collection. Destroy boxes and place in a sealed, non-clear garbage bag.