

Holiday Safety Tips



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Tis the season to be jolly, but it is also the season to be wary of burglars, thieves, pickpockets, and other holiday grinchers. Nothing can ruin the Christmas spirit faster than becoming the victim of a crime.

Remember, whether you are leaving the house to go shopping or out for an evening of Christmas parties, lock your doors and windows! Don't leave the drapes open with your presents in plain view. Christmas presents displayed around your tree can be a pretty sight, but can also be quite tempting to burglars. It's better to scatter the gifts around the house, in closets or cupboards, where they can't be so easily seen.



If you choose to have a live Christmas tree, make sure it is always properly watered. Never leave tree lights on when no one is at home. Remember, ornaments can also burn.

If you are leaving town for the holidays, make sure your home appears occupied. Leave inside and outside lights on timers and have your neighbors pick up newspapers, mail, and take flyers off your door. Ask neighbors to park in your driveway. Put a timer on a talk radio station for several hours a day.



After Christmas, don't put out empty boxes advertising your new purchases (VCR's, microwaves, etc.). Break the boxes down and deposit them in your trash, recycle bin or dumpster away from your home.



When you're shopping, use the trunk of your car to keep your packages out of sight. Keep your car locked at all times. Be sure and make several trips to your car to deposit packages in the trunk. Don't allow yourself to become so burdened down with packages that you become a tempting target. When walking through parking lots



be sure that you are aware of your surroundings. Walk with authority. Don't look like a victim!

If you have a garage door opener, do not leave the control openly displayed in your car. Keep the door leading from your house to your garage locked. Try not to leave your garage door open at any time.

Be aware that thieves and pickpockets also do some of their biggest business during the holiday season. Ladies, don't dangle your handbag from your shoulder. You are creating a perfect setup for a purse-snatcher. Instead, keep your purse tucked tightly under your arm. Better yet, don't even carry a purse. Place your checkbook, cash, or credit cards in your front pockets. Avoid carrying your checkbook, cash, and credit cards all together in one wallet, because if a thief gets the whole package together, they can cash checks with your identification and run up a large credit card bill in a short amount of time.



Never give your credit card number over the telephone to anyone when you did not initiate the call. And be sure that you are dealing with a reputable company when ordering merchandise over the telephone.



Don't "flash" large rolls of money in public. You never know who's watching! Also, spread your money around in different pockets. That way, a pickpocket can't clean you out in one fell swoop.

If you go to an automatic teller machine, try to go during the daylight hours. If you must go at night, pick a machine that is well lighted and visible to passing traffic, or inside a grocery or convenience store. If anyone is lurking near the machine, pass it up and find another.

