

HOLIDAY SAFETY & CRIME PREVENTION



TIPS FOR A SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON

SHOPPING

- ❖ Stay ALERT! Be aware of your surroundings and people around you. Trust your instincts; if you feel uncomfortable, get away.
- ❖ Shop with a friend – there is safety in numbers.
- ❖ Do not leave the store alone. Walk with friends, other shoppers, or security.
- ❖ Keep your cell phone on your person.
- ❖ Make sure someone knows where you are going and when you will return.
- ❖ Don't overburden yourself with packages while shopping.
- ❖ Only make online purchases from trusted, secure websites. Look for "https" in the web address to verify security.

GUARD YOUR PURSE OR WALLET

- ❖ Protect your purse or wallet and clean out any unnecessary items before leaving home.
- ❖ Don't carry large amounts of cash or extra credit cards. Carry only those cards that you will need to use that day. Keep a master list of all cards so if your wallet is stolen, they can be reported promptly to the appropriate banking facility.
- ❖ Never leave your purse, wallet or cell phone unattended in a public place.
- ❖ If you carry a purse, carry it close to your body. Place the strap over your shoulder, never around your neck.

DRIVING

- ❖ Keep doors locked while driving.
- ❖ Do not leave your car unattended with children inside or while it is running.
- ❖ Keep your car in good mechanical condition with plenty of fuel in the tank.
- ❖ If you have car trouble, be wary of strangers offering to help. Stay in your locked car and call for help.
- ❖ Be sure of the route you will be taking to your destination. Know alternates.
- ❖ Be patient! Allow yourself extra travel time due to weather conditions and/or heavy holiday traffic.
- ❖ Buckle up! Children and adult passengers, too.
- ❖ Don't drink and drive!

PARKING LOTS

- ❖ Park in a well-lit area.
- ❖ Remember to lock your vehicle!!
- ❖ A thief is looking for easy targets & the more you can do to deter them from choosing your car, the better.
- ❖ Minimize the number of valuables left in your vehicle. Keep valuables, electronics (including cell phones and DVD players), gifts and other “theft attractors” out of sight.
- ❖ Have your keys out and ready when you return to your vehicle.
- ❖ Lock purse and other valuables in your trunk PRIOR to arriving at the shopping center, mall, or other parking area.

CHILDREN

- ❖ Role-play with children about what they should do in the event you are separated.
- ❖ Teach your child to go to a store clerk and ask for help if separated or lost.
- ❖ Teach children to stay close to you at all times. Avoid unaccompanied trips to restrooms, etc.
- ❖ Teach your child their name, address, and phone number to give to a police officer or mall security officer only.

STRANGERS AT YOUR DOOR

- ❖ Use caution anytime there is a stranger at your door.
- ❖ Be suspicious of unexpected sales calls or deliveries. Ask for identification.
- ❖ Be aware of scams that criminals commit to take advantage of people's generosity during the holidays.
- ❖ Investigate charities before making donations. Ask how the funds will be used.

ATTENDING A PARTY

- ❖ Use the “buddy system” when attending parties.
- ❖ Consume food before you drink alcohol to slow the absorption rate.
- ❖ Never leave food or drinks unattended.
- ❖ Only time can rid the body of alcohol – not coffee, cold showers, etc.
- ❖ Drink responsibly. Arrange for a trusted designated driver.

AT HOME

- ❖ Make sure all doors & windows have secondary locks (window pins, deadbolts, dowels, etc.) and use them!
- ❖ Don't hide spare keys in mailboxes and planters, or under doormats.
- ❖ Ensure that dark areas and entrances have outdoor lights that are turned on after dark or that are activated by sensors.
- ❖ Keep trees and shrubbery trimmed so they do not conceal doors and windows. Remember, overgrown foliage can provide a hiding place for criminals.
- ❖ Place gifts where they can't be seen from the outside.
- ❖ Consider safe deposit boxes for coin and stamp collections, seldom worn jewelry, stock and bonds, etc.
- ❖ Be sure to mail cards, checks or gift certificates from the Post Office or a blue US Postal Service collection box.
- ❖ Lock your vehicle and remove all the valuables. Yes, even in your driveway.

LEAVING FOR THE HOLIDAYS

- ❖ Ask a trusted friend, neighbor or Neighborhood Watch member to watch your home.
- ❖ Use timers for lights and radios while you're away.
- ❖ Remember to make arrangements for mail and newspapers.

AFTER THE HOLIDAYS

- ❖ Don't advertise expensive toys, electronics, or other gifts received by the boxes left for garbage collections. Compress large boxes and place them in black garbage bags for pick-up.
- ❖ Add new items to your home inventory. Take photos or video of all items of value in your home and list each item's make, model, serial number or other information.
- ❖ Engrave new items to help identify them in the event they are stolen.



For more information, please call:

Knoxville Police Department

(865) 215-7000

Safety Education Unit

(865) 215-1325