

## **HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS**

*The rush and good will that surround the holidays can increase the opportunities for criminal activity. We suggest these simple tips to assist you in having a safe and happy holiday season.*

### **Holiday Crime Prevention Tips 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 that 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.

### **Holiday Crime Prevention Tips in Parking Lots:**

- 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.
- Do 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 cautionary 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.

### **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 your 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.

### **When Driving:**

- Recognize that the holidays can cause stress—keep emotions under control while driving. Give other drivers plenty of space and always leave yourself a route to avoid an accident
- If you attend parties where alcohol is served, and you consume, remember to use a designated driver.
- Prepare for winter driving conditions and equip your vehicle with cold weather emergency supplies.
- Minimize distractions such as talking on a cell phone.
- Take frequent breaks to avoid fatigue, especially when driving long distances. If you get tired, stop and rest until you're able to drive with full attention.
- Buckle up! That means passengers and especially children!
- Be patient! Give yourself extra time for travel, especially in snow or rain. Even in dry conditions, traffic during the holidays is heavier than normal, and it will take longer that you expect to get around.

### **After the holidays:**

- Pay close attention to bills and report any unauthorized charges.
- Photograph and record the serial numbers of new items and add them to your inventory.