

# Summer Safety

## If You're Traveling...

Get an automatic timer for your lights (interior and exterior).

Ask a neighbor to watch your home, pick-up flyers or newspapers and park in the driveway from time to time.

Don't forget to have mail and newspaper delivery stopped. If it piles up, it's a sure sign you're away.

Do not leave on the voicemail that you are out of town. Do not post vacation plans on listserv or social media pages.

Make arrangements to have your lawn mowed.

Hide your garbage cans out of sight or ask a neighbor to use them occasionally.

Don't advertise your vacation plans. Tell only one relative or neighbor you can trust. Don't leave vacation plans and dates in open view inside your home.

Secure your valuables in a safe deposit box.

Make sure your relative or neighbor knows how to reach you in case of an emergency.

Insist that your neighbor or relative checking your home, call the police regarding suspicious activities and crimes.

Police      911    EMERGENCY  
301-279-8000    NON - EMERGENCY

## **If You're Out For The Evening...**

Place lights on a timer, leave a radio or TV on so it looks like someone's home.

Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave, even if it's just for a few minutes.

Utilize window treatments, minimize the visibility into your residence especially where there are valuables.

## **If You're Shopping....**

Stay alert and be aware of what's going on around you.

Park in well-lighted space, and be sure to lock the car, close the windows, and hide shopping bags and valuables in the trunk. Do not leave any valuables visible in your vehicles.

Avoid carrying large amounts of cash, pay with a check or credit card whenever possible.

Deter pickpockets and purse-snatchers. Don't overburden yourself with packages. Be extra careful with purses and wallets. Carry a purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps. Put a wallet in an inside sports coat or front pants pocket.

If you feel uncomfortable walking to your vehicle at the mall, security officers will escort you to your vehicle.

**REMEMBER:** If you see something ..Say something! Call Police  
Police Remind Community about Charities and  
Door-to-Door Solicitors

Now that the weather is getting warm there may be door-to-door solicitors knocking on your door and calling your home asking for donations or soliciting work. Montgomery County Police would like to remind the community that there are ways to verify whether an organization is legitimate.

**The Montgomery County Office of Consumer Protection offers the following tips regarding charities:**

- **Ask for written information about the charity**, including name, address and telephone number. A legitimate charity or fundraiser will give out information about the charity's mission, how your donation will be used and proof that the contribution is tax deductible.
- **Call the Maryland Secretary of State at 1-800-825-4510** .
- **Watch out for similar sounding names.** Some phony charities use names that closely resemble those of respected and legitimate organizations.
- **Know the difference between "tax exempt" and "tax deductible."** Tax exempt means the organization doesn't have to pay taxes. Tax deductible means you can deduct your contribution on your federal income tax return. Even if an organization is tax exempt, your contribution may not be tax deductible.
- **Refuse high pressure appeals.** Legitimate fundraisers won't push you to give on the spot.
- **Avoid cash gifts.** Cash can be lost or stolen. For security and tax record purposes, it's best to pay by check and make it out to the charity (using their full name, not initials) not to the fundraiser. Alternatively, you can mail your check directly to the charity.
- You can also check out a charity with these organizations: Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance, 4200 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 800, Arlington, VA 22203, 703-276-0100 or [www.give.org](http://www.give.org).
- For more information contact the **Montgomery County Office of Consumer Protection** at 240-777-3636 or <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov>

- Buyer beware, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is
- Avoid doing business with unlicensed contractors
- Never provide personal information over the telephone or by computer unless you initiated the contact and can verify the merchant
- Do your homework before making a purchase, check the merchant's complaint history
- Read contracts and sales receipts carefully. Never sign a blank document