

General Crime Prevention Tips for the Holidays

Be **ALERT** and **AWARE** of your surroundings at all times.

Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason. At this time of year, "con-artists" may try various methods of distracting you with the intention of taking your money or belongings.

Pay attention to who is around you & what activities are happening.

Don't leave the safety of a building or your vehicle until you have ensured all is secure & safe.

Trust your instincts; if you feel uncomfortable with a place or person, get away!

In The Parking Lot

Always park where there is plenty of light, not only around your car, but also from your car to the mall or store entrance.

Once your car is parked, familiarize yourself with its location so you can find it without delay.

Remember to always lock your vehicle.

Have your keys out and ready when you return to your vehicle and look around you prior to opening your car door.

Use the trunk of your car to keep your packages out of sight. Minimize the number of valuables left in your vehicle and keep valuables, electronics (including cell phones and DVDs), gifts and other theft attractors out of sight.

Don't hesitate to ask for a security escort if you feel unsafe.

Protect your purse or wallet and clean out any unnecessary items before leaving home. Never leave your purse, wallet or cell phone unattended in a public place.

Avoid carrying your checkbook, cash, and credit cards all together in one wallet, because a thief who gets the whole package together can cash checks with your identification and run up a large credit card bill in a short amount of time. Keep your keys separate, too.

Don't "flash" large rolls of money in public. You never know who's watching!

Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.

If you use pockets, place your checkbook, cash, or credit cards in your front pockets. Only bring one or two credit cards and a limited amount of cash with you.

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, or better yet, don't even carry a purse. Wear a fanny pack facing the front instead. Besides allowing your hands to be free to hold onto or carry your child or packages, you'll eliminate the possibility of leaving your purse behind or having it stolen.

Don't overburden yourself with packages while shopping.

Consolidate as many packages as possible, or 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.

Avoid carrying large, heavy packages that block your vision and make you a target for purse-snatchers.

Shop with a buddy – there is safety in numbers.

General Residential Burglary Prevention Tips

THE BURGLARY BASICS:

Make your home look occupied, and make it difficult to break in.

Burglaries do happen in the daylight hours.

Lock all outside doors and windows before you leave the house or go to bed. Even if it is for a short time, lock your doors. Deadbolts are good for outside doors.

Leave lights on when you go out. If you are going to be away for a length of time, connect some lamps to automatic timers to turn them on in the evening and off during the day.

Keep your garage door closed and locked, even when home. If you do leave your garage door open and it is an attached garage – lock the door into the house. If you are going away and leaving a vehicle that has a garage door opener inside, it is a good idea to secure the opener. Most automatic garage doors can be locked or disabled preventing the remote openers from opening them.

Don't allow daily deliveries of mail, newspapers or flyers build up while you are away. Arrange with the Post Office to hold your mail, or arrange for a friend or neighbor to take them regularly.

It's a good idea to tell a trusted neighbor that you will be away, and who if anyone will be checking on your home.

Arrange for your lawn to be mowed if you are going away for an extended time.

Check your locks on doors and windows and replace them with secure devices as necessary.

Sliding glass doors are vulnerable. Special locks are available for better security. Even a wooden dowel or a track blocker will help prevent the door from opening.

DON'T TEMPT A THIEF:

Lawn mowers, snow blowers, barbecues and bicycles are best stored out of sight.

Always lock your garden sheds and garages.

Use curtains on garage and basement windows.

Never leave notes on your door such as "Gone shopping."

LOCKS.....GET THE BEST:

No lock, regardless of its quality, can be truly effective. Key-in dead bolt locks provide minimum security. Ask a locksmith for advice on your situation.

Pushbutton locks on doorknobs are easy for burglars to open. Install deadbolt locks on all your outside doors.

Change locks immediately if your keys are lost or stolen. When moving into a new home, have all locks changed.

SECURING THE OUTSIDE:

Adequate exterior lighting. A motion-sensitive light is recommended for front, side, driveway and backyards. Suggestion: delayed motion sensors...which may make a thief think you've just flipped a switch inside the house.

Trim trees and shrubs so that they cannot be used as hiding places for intruders.

Make sure your door hinges are on the inside.

Use alarm decals, beware of dog decals, and/or community watch decals near doors.

WINDOWS:

Some windows may need better locks. Check with a locksmith or hardware store for alternatives.

Most windows can be pinned for security.

Drill a 3/16" hole on a slight downward slant through the inside window frame and halfway into the outside frame - place a nail in the hole to secure the window.

Cover windows and glass front doors with blinds or curtains.

Always lock the windows, even the small bathroom window that you think nobody could possibly fit through.

ALARM SYSTEMS:

An alarm system is **excellent** for home security. It provides peace of mind to homeowners, especially while on vacation. Variety of alarm systems on the market for house security and motion sensors for property. Make several inquiries to different companies for the best security system available to you. The Police Department is notified by the alarm company directly if there is activation.

INSIDE THE RESIDENCE:

Find GOOD hiding places in your home for high-ticket items, especially jewelry. Jewelry boxes make things quick and easy for the burglar. Don't use the typical places like under mattresses, in drawers, in desks/file cabinets, etc.

Secure guns in safes that are bolted to the floor or large enough that someone could not move without a lot of help.

Limit the amount of cash kept in the home, and store it in a creative hiding place.

IF YOUR HOME IS BROKEN INTO:

If you come home to find an unexplained open/broken window or door, Do not enter - the perpetrator may still be inside.

Use a cellular phone or a neighbor's phone to call police.

Do not touch anything or clean up until the police have inspected for evidence.

Write down the license plate numbers of any suspicious vehicles.

Note the descriptions of any suspicious persons

OTHER PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE:

Never leave keys under doormats, flowerpots, mailboxes or other "secret" hiding places. Burglars know where to look for hidden keys.

Keep a detailed inventory of your valuable possessions, including a description of the items, date of purchase and original value, and serial numbers, and keep a copy in a safe place away from home -- this is a good precaution in case of fires or other disasters. Make a photographic or video record of valuable objects, heirlooms and antiques. Your insurance company can provide assistance in making and keeping your inventory.

Trim your shrubbery around your home to reduce cover for burglars.

Be a good neighbor. If you notice anything suspicious in your neighborhood, call 911 immediately.

Mark your valuables with your driver's license number with an engraver. Marked items are harder for a burglar to dispose of and easier for police to recover.

The **MOST** important thing **YOU** can do is **CALL THE POLICE** to report a **CRIME** or any **SUSPICIOUS** activity. You have to be the eyes of your neighborhood. And remember you can always remain a pair of anonymous eyes!

Suspicious Activity = door-to-door solicitation, strange vehicles in area, people asking for work, anyone with stories that don't add-up, people asking for persons who don't live at your residence, and anyone carrying items from someone's home, or carrying back-packs, bags in the area.

