



Holiday Safety Tips:

Don't Be A Holiday Crime Target

Tis the season to be jolly and, unfortunately, tis also the season for criminals to take advantage of frolicking folks.

When you are at the mall looking for those precious gifts, take the following precautions to protect yourself from becoming a victim:

- Make a note of your parking spot so that you don't have to wander around the parking lot after shopping.
- Have your keys in your hand before leaving the mall and walk purposely to your car. Make sure nobody is in the car before entering, and lock the doors immediately when you get inside.
- If you are leaving a mall alone at night, you may request a security escort to your car.
- Don't leave packages visible on the seats or floor of your car. Use the trunk.
- If you take packages to your car trunk and want to go back to the mall, move your car. Most newer vehicles have a trunk release inside the car (in the glove box or by the driver). If the thief sees something that you have just purchased that he wants, he can easily break a window and open your trunk.
- At an Automated Teller Machine (ATM), choose one that is located inside a mall, grocery store, or well-lighted location. Withdraw only the amount of cash you need. Shield the ATM keypad from anyone who is standing near you so they cannot view your transaction or obtain your PIN. Do not throw your ATM receipt away.
- Don't display large sums of cash in public. Be discreet about money or other valuables you are carrying.



- Be alert in public restrooms. If anything seems amiss or if a group of people is loitering in the area, leave quickly and find another facility.
- Stay alert in crowds to protect your valuables. A thief can use the cover of the crowd to make a quick getaway after stealing your wallet or shopping bag.
- Take only the credit cards you NEED for shopping, leave the rest at home.
- Ladies, carry your purses close to your body and separate your cash from your credit card.
- Men, consider carrying your wallet in a front pocket and/or adding a large rubber band around it so if a thief tries to swipe it, it will get caught on the pocket.
- Don't keep your keys in your purse. If your purse is stolen, the thief will have your address and keys to your home. Keep your keys in your pocket without an ID.
- Try to park as close to the entrance of the mall or store as possible. In a parking garage, park on the level that leads directly to the mall, so you can avoid elevators or stairwells. Stay alert for people standing behind parked cars or pillars. At night, park under a light whenever possible.
- Consider using the mall's valet parking service if it offers one.
- If you have a removable car stereo, remove it.
- Along with being sure all your doors and windows are shut and locked; use an anti-theft device such as a car alarm or a club.
- And, special winter weather warning: During the winter months, many people warm up their cars in the morning and then leave them unattended. Don't do this! Not only is it against the law, but a running car is also an invitation to a car thief.