

Seattle Police Email Community Newsletter
November 30, 2016
Holiday Season Safety Tips



Dear Community Friends,

As we enter the Holiday Season, we once again wanted to provide you with recommendations to reduce your risk of being a crime victim this time of year. We hope you find the information useful and encourage you to share this with your neighbors.

Car Prowl Prevention

- * When you exit or enter your parked vehicle, take a moment to look around the area.
- * Turn off and lock your car whenever you have to walk away from it. This includes at gas pumps, ATMs, coffee shops, etc. Never leave your car idling and unattended.
- * Before leaving your parked car, always remove the keys, roll up the windows and lock the car.
- * **Leave No Valuables in Your Car.** Never leave valuables in your car. Items of little or no value to you still look inviting to a thief. Even pocket change is enough of an enticement for some thieves.
- * If you must leave valuables in your car (say you're out shopping and still have some stops to make), make sure that nothing of value is within plain view. Place items in your car trunk out of sight. Do this when you get to your car, rather than waiting until you park at your next stop.
- * Don't leave accessories visible in your car. You may have taken the Laptop or iPod in with you, but if you leave the USB cables for your laptop or earbuds for the iPod in the back seat, the offender may think those items are in the car and break in anyway.
- * If you have a GPS, think about how it is mounted in your car. If the mounting for the GPS is visible, the thief may think the GPS is in the glove box or under the seat and may break in to try to get it. Have removable mounting for the GPS and put that out of sight as well.

Personal Safety

- * Before you leave home decide what you actually need to take with you rather than automatically taking your entire handbag or wallet out of habit. For example, if you are going to the grocery store for a few items, you can carry cash, a single check, or credit/debit card, I.D. and keys in a pocket.
- * Wear clothing and shoes that are comfortable, low profile and appropriate for the weather. This may not be the most fashionable choice but it is the safest.
- * Always plan your route and stay alert to your surroundings. Avoid shortcuts. Walk confidently. Scan your surroundings and make eye contact with people.
- * Carry your keys and ID separately. If someone gets your keys and ID, they may go to your home or business and access that location with the keys.
- * Always maintain positive control over your items. Don't tempt a thief by leaving your purse, wallet or packages unattended. It only takes a second to grab them. Never leave your purse unattended, even if it is in a shopping cart.
- * If you carry a purse, don't dangle it from your arm. Carry it very close to you, preferable with the strap over your shoulder and the purse to the front of your body. Even better would be to carry the purse over your shoulder *across* your body and under your coat.
- * Take a friend along when doing holiday shopping. Using the buddy system reduces your chances of being a victim of robbery.
- * When paying by cash, only take out the amount needed and keep the remainder out of view. It's always a good idea to carry minimal amounts of cash, regardless of the time of year.
- * Beware of strangers who bump, shove or get too close. Pickpockets may use these diversions to lift your wallet.
- * Be cautious of those you don't know who offer to carry bags and packages for you. Depending on where you shop, store personnel or mall security may offer assistance in carrying packages to your car or escorting you to your vehicle.

- * Before returning to your car, make sure you're not over-burdened with packages. Have your car keys in hand to avoid searching for them when you reach your car.
- * If you are attacked on the street, make as much noise as possible by calling for help or blowing a whistle. *Do not pursue your attacker. Call 911 and report the crime as soon as possible.*

Prevention Tips At Home

- * Don't openly display wrapped or received gifts so they are easily visible from the street. You increase the possibility that a burglar will be tempted to gain entry and steal the gifts.
- * When disposing of the packaging in which gifts and other purchases come, realize that when you place these out for recycling or trash collection, those boxes sitting out on the curb on collection day give a passer-by a pretty good indication of what's in your home. Recycle the packaging, yes - but break the boxes down first, turn them inside out so the exterior writing does not show, and don't put them on the curb until collection day.
- * Burglars often enter through unlocked doors or windows. When exterior holiday light extension cords are run inside through a window, this prevents the window from being secured, and this unsecured window is visibly noticeable. Consider installing an inexpensive exterior outlet for your holiday lights so you don't provide an opened and unlocked entry to your home.
- * If you are going to be away, let your trusted neighbors know that you plan to be out town so that they can watch your home for you. If they see suspicious activity while you are gone, they will know to call 911 for you.

Package Theft Prevention

- * We are at a time of year when we see an increase in package thefts from homes. Some package thieves will follow or watch for delivery trucks and then target a home after a delivery is made; other thieves may just happen to see the package left at the doorstep of the home, in plain view of the street, and help themselves. To reduce the opportunity for packages to be left unattended on your porch and therefore an enticing target for thieves, we encourage you to communicate with the carrier and request one of the following options for delivery:
 - * Track your shipment: All of the major delivery companies offer package tracking, some providing free alerts letting you know where your package is in the shipping process.
 - * Have items delivered to your place of business rather than your home.
 - * Require a signature upon delivery.
 - * Pick up the item(s) from the carrier's local hub.
 - * Ask the delivery service to hold your package for customer pick-up at their local shipping facility.
 - * Request the package be left with a trusted neighbor who has agreed to accept the package for you.
 - * Arrange to have the package shipped to another location where someone can receive it. This could be your workplace, a friend or relative's home, with a trusted neighbor, the leasing office at your apartment complex or even the local "mailbox" business that may agree to accept shipment of your item for a fee.
 - * If none of the above are viable options, at the very least request the package be placed in a discrete location not visible from the street.

We wish you a happy and joyous Holiday Season. Peace, prosperity and good health to you and yours this Season and in the coming New Year.

Until next time, Take Care and Stay Safe!

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