



# Holiday Safety Tips



from

The Cleveland Police Department



Christmas is a time of year during which many of us will be busy shopping and running errands in order to be ready for the holiday season. We must not forget criminals will also be out and about looking for easy targets to make a big score. The number one way to stay safe is to be aware of your surroundings. Be aware of people around you and be alert to things which just “don’t feel right”. Report any suspicious activity to store employees and law enforcement.

Here are some other simple tips which can reduce your chances of becoming a victim of crime:

## Parking Lots:

- Always be aware of your surroundings
- Always have your car keys in your hand when walking in parking areas.
- Remember not to leave valuables in your car. Thieves can walk by cars and look for items of interest. Many times doors are left unlocked and the theft takes just a short time. If they see it and want it, they will get it! Keep valuables with you and make sure to put purchases in the trunk or out of sight.  
Also be aware people are watching you as you put your purchases in your vehicle. If you ever feel you are being followed, immediately call 911 and drive towards a busy area.
- Always scan the parking lot for suspicious persons or vehicles *before* you park and exit your vehicle
- Don't be ashamed to ask!! Request security personnel to escort you to your vehicle.

## Stores:

- Don't display large sums of cash. Use credit cards and personal checks whenever possible.
- When possible, shop with a friend or spouse.
- Report all suspicious persons and vehicles to security/ Police immediately.
- Remember to guard your purse. It takes a thief seconds to reach in and take your wallet, phone, or other valuables. Keep your purse closed, in deep part of buggy, and always in your sight.

## Home:

- Don't display gifts under your tree from a front window of your home. Although this looks pretty, it can be attractive to would-be thieves
- After the chaos of Christmas morning is over, be cautious of throwing packaging out. Make sure you do not advertise what new items are inside your home. Put your trash in black garbage bags, turn boxes inside out, or make a trip to the dump. Don't let thieves 'window shop' for their next target.
- Also, don't forget to record serial numbers of any new items you get during the holidays. Serial numbers are the best way to help get a stolen item back to its owner.

Travel:

If you plan on traveling during the holidays, make sure you ask a trusted neighbor to watch your home. Make sure they get the mail or contact the Post Office to have your mail held while you are gone. Timers for lights are a great tool to make your house look occupied while you are gone. Don't post travel plans on social media, alerting people your home will be unoccupied.

The Cleveland Police Department hopes you have a wonderful holiday season! We work 24/7 to help make Cleveland a safer and better place to live. Remember you can contact emergency services at **(423) 728-7311** for non-emergencies or to request extra patrol.