

## **Holiday Crime Prevention Tips 2013**

The holiday season is a time of celebration with friends and family. It can also be a time when busy people become careless and vulnerable to theft and other holiday crimes. Please take the time to apply the following holiday crime prevention measures.

### **Driving**

- Be cautious while driving alone at night.
- Keep all doors locked and windows closed while in or out of your vehicle.
- Avoid parking next to large vehicles or vehicles with heavy tinted windows.
- Park in well lighted areas.
- Never leave your vehicle unattended with children inside or while it is running.
- Do not leave gifts or other valuables in plain sight in your vehicle; it is an unnecessary temptation for thieves.
- Be aware of your surroundings when approaching or leaving your vehicle.
- Try to stay in a group when approaching your vehicle.
- If security is available, ask for an escort to your vehicle if leaving at night and alone.
- If you are going to consume alcoholic beverages. plan to have a designated driver or use public transportation. Never drink and drive.

### **Shopping**

- Even though you are rushed and thinking of a thousand different things, always be aware of your surroundings.
- Minimize shopping at night or alone; you are more susceptible to being victimized at night or while alone.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. Take only the cash you need or pay with a credit card or ATM card; carry only as many cards as you will need.
- If you must use an ATM, use one inside of a well-populated building or a well-lighted area. Only withdraw the amount of cash that you will need for that day.
- Protect your PIN from the view of other people near the ATM.
- Keep a record of all your credit card numbers at home in a safe location. Report lost or stolen credit cards immediately.
- Be extra careful when carrying a wallet or purse; only carry what you absolutely need in them. They are prime targets for criminals in crowded shopping areas, transportation terminals and bus stops.
- Avoid overloading yourself with packages whether on your person or in your vehicle.

### **Dress**

- Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- Carry your purse securely around your shoulder. Only carry what you need.

### **At Home**

- Be aware that sometimes criminals will pose as couriers delivering gifts to case your home or to commit a crime immediately.
- Be aware of scams that criminals commit to take advantage of people's generosity during the holidays.
- Be cautious about locking your windows and doors even when you leave the house for a short period of time.
- When you leave your home for extended holiday travel, have a neighbor or friend

watch your home while you're away. Have them collect your mail and newspapers while you're gone.

- Place lights, radio, and televisions on timers to that your home appears occupied.
- Avoid having large displays of gifts visible from windows and doors.