

*ALERT- many cars and trucks are being broken into and/or ransacked for GPS units; cellphones; tools; loose change; etc. DO NOT leave these belongings in your car.

CRIME PREVENTION TIPS

* **Do** you have a list of serial numbers for your electronic items?

* **Don't** leave valuables in your vehicle.

* **Do** have motion activated exterior lights.

* **Trim your shrubbery** that is providing hiding spots for burglars.

* **Back up** your computer files in the event your computer is stolen. You'll lose everything!

HOME

Most burglaries are not done by professionals. Many are done by juveniles and many are crimes of opportunity. DON'T give a thief the opportunity!

- Make your home as safe as possible by engaging in good habits. Always use your window locks when closing windows. Have good deadbolts installed and use them. If you can afford it, get an alarm system, regardless of whether or not you use an alarm service. A home that is well secured reduces the chance of break-in. Many homes are entered through open windows; basement windows; bulkheads; garage doors and improperly locked doors.

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- When you're away, have lights on a timer. Leave a radio on to a talk station. If possible, leave a car in the driveway. Stop mail and paper delivery or have a neighbor collect it for you. If you're going away in the winter, pay someone to shovel your walk and driveway so your home doesn't stand out as vacant.
- Get to know your neighbors! Have them check on your home when away.

VALUABLES

- Do you have a record of your DVD, camera, cell phone, stereo, tv, laptop, etc. serial numbers. Whenever you buy an item that has a serial number, record the number in a file. (Do not store the file solely on a computer that may be stolen...store a copy in a drawer). Many times the police have to return YOUR stolen belongings to a thief because they cannot determine ownership. Serial numbers are the best ID. Engrave all expensive tools and other items with an engraver if the serial number is missing.
- Photograph your jewelry. Jewelry is often unique and a picture can help identify it. It's also important for insurance purposes.
- Have a home safe for jewelry and other high value items and use it. A small fireproof safe that is bolted to a stud from the inside will deter many thieves.
- Consider a safe deposit box for high value items that you don't often wear or use.
- If you have lawn equipment, such as leaf blowers, snow blowers, etc, record their serial numbers. These items are often stolen out of poorly secured sheds.

VEHICLES

- Lock your cars, even in your driveway. Often, thieves will go through neighborhoods and steal change, cell phones, Ipods, cigarettes, etc., from unlocked cars. Don't leave these valuables in your car.
- Try and park in high traffic areas, such as near main entrances, etc.
- Make sure you know your license plate number. If your car was stolen, could you tell the police your plate number? Without it, the vehicle ID number can't be obtained and the car cannot be entered into the nationwide computer system.

Christmas/Hanukkah Season

Follow these safety tips to ensure a safe and joyful holiday season!

AT HOME

Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave the house, even if you will only be gone for a minute.

- Don't put large displays of holiday gifts in view of your windows or doors.
- Don't put valuable gifts under the tree too early.
- Record serial numbers upon purchase and store them safely.
- When going on trips or out for evenings, use automatic timers to turn indoor lights on and off to make it appear you are home.
- Immediately after the holidays, mark new gifts with your License or ID number.

- Don't advertise what you got for Christmas by putting the boxes out on trash day. Break the boxes down or take them to the dump yourself.

SHOPPING SAFETY

- Lock packages in the trunk. Don't leave them on the seats.
- Don't overload yourself with packages.
- If you must shop in the evening, shop with a friend.
- Park in well-lighted areas, as close as possible to store entrances. Be particularly aware of persons in the parking lot, especially near your car.
- Lock your car and make sure the windows are closed.
- Many shopping centers have security cameras. Look for them and park where they appear to be pointed.
- Carry only the charge cards you will need. Don't carry or flash large sums of cash.
- Carry your purse next to your body with the purse flap against you. Many purses are stolen out of shopping carriages when you are looking at items on the shelves! Men should carry their wallets in front or inside pockets.
- Be aware of your surroundings and the people around you. Don't allow your attention to become distracted from your purse or packages.
- Teach children to go to a store clerk or security guard and ask for help if you become separated in a store or shopping mall.
- Don't hesitate to notify store security if you see suspicious activity.
- If you have to wait for a ride, wait in a busy, well-lighted place.
- If you are a victim of a crime, report it to police immediately.

IDENTITY THEFT

- All a thief needs to steal your identity is your social security number. Safeguard your card.
- Never give out your number over the phone unless you've initiated the phone call.
- Use a shredder for all mail/documents that have credit card numbers or other personal information. Thieves go through garbage. We make it easier by separating our paper in a recycle bin.
- Do not leave out-going mail in your mailbox. Use a drop box.
- Make sure your computer is protected with up-to-date virus and spyware protection to ward off hackers.
- The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recommends the following actions be taken if you think you're identity has been stolen:
 - Contact the fraud departments of any one of the three consumer reporting companies to place a fraud alert on your credit report.

- Close accounts you know or believe to be compromised.
- File your complaint with the FTC. The FTC maintains a database of ID theft cases.
- File a report with your local police.

For more information or to file a complaint online, visit www.ftc.gov

A 10 minute video is available on that site.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Click here for our Crime Analysis page for area crime maps.](#)

[Click here for Crime Prevention Principles...engaging the power of prevention](#)