

Before You Shop...

- Shop during daylight hours whenever possible. If you must shop at night, go with a friend or family member.
- Always carry small amounts of cash and wear minimal jewelry. Carry only the required amount of cash/credit cards that you will be using for your purchases.
- Keep a record of all of your credit card numbers in a safe place at home.
- Carry your keys, cash and credit cards separate from each other.
- Do not wear valuable jewelry while shopping. Avoid anything that draws attention to you and conveys affluence.
- If possible, leave your children with family, friends/neighbors or a baby-sitter while you are shopping. If you take your children shopping, keep a close eye on them.
- Shop with a relative or friend if possible. There is safety in numbers.
- Avoid using walk up ATM machines in malls where you are shopping.
- Avoid going to ATMs at night, especially if you are alone. Use ATMs in populated places and pay close attention to what is going on around you.

While Shopping...

- If you do carry a purse or bag, carry it close to your body and always zipped.
- Always carry your cash/wallets in your front pockets.
- Do not leave your bags unattended when shopping or paying for an item. If necessary, place your bags between your feet and the counter or rack.
- Avoid overloading yourself with packages. It is important to have clear visibility and freedom of motion.
- Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason. At this time of year, "con artists" may try various methods of distracting you with the intention of taking your money or belongings.
- Leave the store well before closing time. This way, there is greater assurance you will walk out with other people. There is always safety in numbers.
- Avoid shopping until you are exhausted. You are more alert and vigilant when you are less tired.
- When hurried or in a crowded shop, make sure you get all forms of ID and credit cards returned to you before leaving.
- Always be vigilant and use your "street smarts."

In Parking Lots...

- Park your car as close to the store entrance as possible. Park in well-lit areas. Avoid parking next to large vehicles, bushes, or dumpsters.
- Walk in areas that are open and well lit.
- If available, ask security to escort you to your vehicle if you are leaving alone late at night.
- Some people have tendencies to get into their cars and just sit balancing their checkbooks or checking lists. Do not do this. As soon as you get into the car, lock the doors and leave.
- Always have your car keys in your hand to ensure easy access to your vehicle.
- If you feel threatened, press the alarm button on your car remote. If the alarm goes off on the car, it will normally discourage would-be perpetrators.
- Before getting into your car in a parking lot or parking garage:
 - ✓ **Be aware and vigilant**
 - ✓ **Look around the area**
 - ✓ **Look around, under and into (seat wells front & rear) your car before entering**
- If you are leaving an area and a van with side sliding doors is parked beside your vehicle, enter your vehicle from the opposite side door.
- Look at the car parked next to either side of your vehicle. If someone is sitting alone in the seat nearest your car, you may want to walk back to where you came from and have someone walk you to your vehicle.
- When leaving malls or other large parking areas, you may get in your vehicle, start it up, and proceed to back out of the parking space. This is when you also may notice a large flyer or some sort of paper on your windshield or rear window. Do not get out. Drive to another area and then stop, get out and remove the flyer.
- Always take the elevator instead of the stairs. Stairwells are horrible places to be alone and the perfect crime spot. This is especially true at night.
- Keep your packages stored out of sight in the trunk of your car if you are going to continue shopping at another location.

At Home...

- Make sure that all windows are closed and locked. If you have deadlocks don't forget to use them. Also remember to lock garages, bulkheads and sheds.
- Use timers to turn certain lights on for a couple of hours in the evening, or to turn the television/radio on for certain time periods.
- Remember to set your security alarm system when you leave.
- Hide your valuables in a safe place.
- Do not leave a spare key under the welcome mat or in another "secret" hiding place. Experienced burglars have seen most of them before and know where to look.
- Lock your power box with an electricity authority lock (to which you and the electric company have a key) so that your home security alarm system can't be cut off from the power supply.
- Keep gifts (and purses) hidden from view through outside perimeter windows.
- After opening gifts, break down cardboard boxes to avoid revealing your purchase of expensive electronics or other valuable items.
- Do not have long periods of time when no one is home and your phone may go unanswered. Beware of telephone scam artists. Never provide personal information such as Social Security number, account or PIN numbers. If you did not initiate the call, do not provide any personal information!
- Check your bills and bank statements for unauthorized charges and withdrawals. If you suspect identity theft, immediately call a consumer-reporting company, close the suspect accounts, and report it to the police. Phone numbers for reporting ID theft:
 - ✓ **Equifax Credit Bureau – Fraud (800) 525-6285**
 - ✓ **TransUnion Credit Bureau – Fraud (800) 680-7289**
 - ✓ **Federal Trade Commission (877) IDTHEFT**
 - ✓ **Social Security Administration – Fraud Hot Line (800) 269-0271**



Holiday Travel Safety Tips

Pre-Plan Your Trip

- Leave your itinerary with family or a trusted neighbor or friend so that someone knows where you are.
- Provide them with a spare key and the PIN number for your home security alarm system so they can get into the house and adjust the curtains, blinds, etc.
- Request that the post office hold your mail and cancel any other regular home deliveries.
- Get a neighbor to park their car in your driveway at different time periods.
- Get a neighbor or friend to take in newspapers and unscheduled deliveries daily.
- Make sure that the personnel contact list that you provide to your home security alarm system company are people that definitely can be contacted during the holidays.

If Traveling By Car

- Pre-plan your trip, including scheduled rest and meal stops.
- If traveling by car, keep doors locked and windows rolled up.
- Maintain at least half a tank of fuel, and keep vehicle in good repair.
- Have your vehicle serviced and checked out sufficiently far ahead to allow for repairs if needed. Don't forget to have the mechanic check your spare tire along with the other preventive maintenance procedures.
- Consider keeping spare fuses and a "breakdown kit" in your vehicle at all times. Minimally, a "breakdown kit" should include a thermal blanket, flares and/or reflectors, a "HELP" sign or flag, and a gallon of water. You should also have a basic first aid kit in your vehicle at all times.
- Follow other vehicles, especially trucks, at a safe distance.
- Do not stop and assist strangers whose vehicles have broken down. Instead, remember the location and phone for help to assist them.
- If traveling in areas that could experience inclement weather, be sure to carry a winter survival kit in your vehicle that contains first aid supplies, blankets, a flashlight with extra batteries, flares, a shovel, and either a bag of sand or salt for traction in case you get stuck on snow or ice.

Holiday Travel Safety Tips

If Traveling by Air

- Book your flight early. Secure advance seat assignments to insure you are sitting with your family on the plane.
- Plan to arrive at the airport at least two hours early.
- Travel light. Review your planned itinerary and pack only what you will need.
- Dress conservatively and comfortably. Do not wear valuable jewelry while traveling. Avoid anything that draws attention to you and conveys affluence.
- Carry essentials, including an ample supply of any medications that you require, in your carry-on hand luggage.
- When traveling, never check a laptop computer in as luggage. Never use a laptop computer in public where others can view your information.
- Check your flight status before leaving for the airport. Airline departures and arrivals are often delayed during the holiday season.
- Keep copies of your travel information in a safe place. It is wise to have copies with you in case the originals are lost.
- Always carry photo identification with you; a driver's license as well as a passport may sometimes avoid unnecessary delays.
- Do not carry wrapped gifts in carry-on luggage, as gifts may need to be inspected at security checkpoints and in some instances they will be unwrapped.
- Keep a close eye on your luggage, purse, laptop and other belongings when checking in at the airline counter. Follow the airline's rules for carry-on baggage. When planes are full, airlines will insist that extra carry-on luggage or oversized bags be checked.
- Put address tags both on the outside and the inside of all baggage; external tags could get torn off during baggage handling.
- Use colorful ribbon or tape to mark your luggage. Many bags look similar and can be inadvertently removed by others from the baggage claim area.
- If carrying oversized items such as golf clubs, skis, or snowboards, check with the airline ahead of time regarding their requirements.
- Whenever possible, avoid driving to the airport; roads are usually congested during the holidays.

Hotel / Motel Security

- Keep a close eye on your luggage, purse, laptop and other belongings when checking in at the hotel counter.
- Do not discuss your room number while standing in the lobby or leave your room key on restaurant or bar tables. Never leave valuables in your hotel room exposed or unattended, even in a locked suitcase.
- Place valuables – money, jewelry, airplane tickets, credit cards, and passport – in a hotel safe deposit box or room safe.
- Familiarize yourself with emergency exits, stairwells and escape routes in case of fire or other catastrophe. Read the fire safety instructions that are posted in your room.
- Use the door chain or bolt lock whenever you are in your room.
- Do not open your hotel room door without first verifying the identity of the person requesting access. If an unexpected delivery comes to your room, do not open the door without first checking with the hotel desk clerk. Use the door viewer (peephole) before opening the door to visitors.
- Ensure your privacy by using tape or tissue to cover the interior of the door's viewer (peephole).
- Keep your room neat so you will notice disturbed or missing items quickly.
- When staying at hotels, always use the main entrance, especially after dark.



Holiday Safety Tips

The time period between Thanksgiving and New Year's is the most heavily traveled time of the year. In addition, it is the busiest consumer purchasing period. Unfortunately, it is also the time of year when criminal activity increases dramatically due to "crimes of opportunity" that holiday activities provide. The following security related tips are provided to assist you in planning for a safe and secure holiday period.

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