

THE DENVER CENTER FOR CRIME VICTIMS



HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

The holiday season is an opportune time for crime! Gifts are in full view under Christmas trees at home. Stores, malls and city streets are full of unsuspecting shoppers. People are rushing around, stressed out and careless, looking for last-minute gifts, trying to get everything done.

Here are some tips on how to keep yourself and your family safe from burglars, muggers, and pickpockets.

When you're shopping...

- **Shop during daylight when possible. Stay alert and be aware of what's going on around you.** Trust your instincts – if you feel uncomfortable, leave and go to a place that is safe.
- **Shop with at least one friend or family member.** Assist each other with carrying packages, making sure neither of you is over loaded. There is safety in numbers when waiting at bus stops or walking through parking lots and garages.
- **Keep people at home informed as to where you are and when you will be home.** Have someone meet you at the bus stop to accompany you home.
- **Park in a well-lighted space, and be sure to lock the car, close the windows, and hide shopping bags and gifts in the trunk.** Have keys in hand when you return to the car. Check the interior of the car before getting inside.
- **Avoid carrying large amounts of cash;** pay with a check or credit card whenever possible.
- **Carry only those credit cards that you are going to use.** Keep the rest in a secure place at home. In a safe place, keep a list of all credit card numbers and contact numbers to call in case they are stolen or lost.
- **When shopping with children, teach them how to go to a store clerk or security guard if you get separated.** Reinforce with your children not to go with or speak to strangers. Tell them not to be enticed by offers of gifts or holiday candy.
- **Discourage pickpockets, and purse and package snatchers.**
 - Don't overburden yourself with packages. Ask for assistance from a store clerk or security guard to help you to your car.
 - Be extra careful with purses and wallets. Decide what items you absolutely must carry with you and leave the rest at home. Use a fanny pack or small pouch that can be worn close to the body. If you must carry a purse, use one with a shoulder strap that you place over your head and across your body.

- Put a wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket.
- **Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave**, even if it's just for a few minutes.
- **Don't display gifts where people looking through windows and doors can see them.** Keep window coverings closed.

If a stranger comes to the door, take these steps.

Criminals sometimes pretend they are couriers delivering gifts. **Use your door peephole and ask to see identification.** Reinforce with your children not to open the door to strangers.

People can try to take advantage of others' generosity during the holidays by going door-to-door for charitable donations when there's no charity involved. **Ask for identification, and tell them you will check out the charity on your own before making a contribution.** If you aren't knowledgeable, don't give. Help a charitable organization you know instead.

Let your houseguests know about your security precautions. Make sure they follow them.

When you are at work...

- **Lock gifts you've bought on your lunch hour in a safe place.** Remind coworkers to do the same.
- **Be especially careful to keep your purse or wallet locked in a drawer or closet.**
- Be alert for people taking advantage of the holiday mood, reduced work force, and people's inattention, to burglarize companies and their employees. **Report to security unauthorized people in places they shouldn't be.**

The holidays are a good time to create or update your home inventory. Take photos or make videos of items, and list descriptions and serial numbers. If your home is burglarized, having a detailed inventory can help identify stolen items and make insurance claims easier to fill out.

Don't let holiday stress get the best of you. Stay cautious and alert but take time for yourself. Get together with family, friends, and neighbors.

Don't let friends, family members or coworkers have their holidays ruined by crime. If someone you know has been a victim, offer to help with locating victim services. Just listening can be a big help.

**DO YOUR PART TO MAKE THE HOLIDAYS A SAFE AND HAPPY TIME FOR
EVERYBODY
- except criminals!**