

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Holiday Crime Prevention Tips

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.

Attending Holiday Parties

If you are going to consume alcoholic beverages, plan to have a designated driver or use public or a paid transportation. Never drink and drive.

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, newspapers, and shovel your snow while you're gone.
- Place lights, radio, and television on timers so that your home appears occupied.
- Avoid having large displays of gifts visible from windows and doors.

Children

- If possible leave small children at home when going shopping.
- If they must go shopping with you, try to keep your children close to you at all times.
- Teach them about "Stranger Danger" and who they can go to for help if they get separated from you. Children should know their full name, address, telephone number, and parent's / guardian's full name to give to police, a store clerk, or security if they get separated from you.

Tis the Season for Thievin'

Please do not leave anything in your vehicle in plain sight which you would not want taken. Always lock your doors even if you plan to be away from your vehicle for only a minute such as running in to pay for gas.

JUST A REMINDER: Sales Personnel Tips Handling Possible Counterfeit Bills

Do not return suspected money to the passer.

Stall the suspect as long as possible.

Get a good description of the suspect, anyone with the suspect, and of the suspect vehicle as well as the license number.

Call 911 as soon as possible.

Try not to handle the bill; put it in a protective covering such as an envelope.

Release the suspected bill only to police or to the United States Secret Service.

When in doubt, call the Draper Police Department.

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Up to the minute real time crime stats are available 24/7 at CrimeReports.com

Driving

- Be cautious while driving alone at night.
- Keep all doors locked and windows closed while in or out of your vehicle.
- Never park next to large vehicles or vehicles with heavy tinted windows.
- Park your vehicle in well lighted areas.
- Never leave your vehicle unattended with children or pets 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.

Dress

- Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- Carry your wallet in your front pants pocket or your purse securely around your shoulder.
- Dress casually and comfortably.

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.

The holiday season is a great time of year and can be very special. It can also be a tragic time of year if you don't take precautions and practice personal safety measures that can help prevent you or your family from being victimized. Schedule family meetings to discuss these crime prevention tips and have a happy holiday.

If you would like more information on any of the material mentioned in this month's newsletter, contact Draper's Neighborhood Watch Specialist at 801.576.6342.