

Holiday Safety Tips from your Neighborhood Watch **(Compiled from several law agencies on the Internet)**

As a reminder with the holiday season upon us, criminals are vigilant as ever. If you are out of town let a neighbor know and consider notifying The Delaware County Sheriff. The Sheriff will make periodic checks on your home but do not forget to notify them of travel plans (coming home early or staying longer!) Lets all look out for one another...don't let packages sit on porches and report unusual activity to the Sheriff immediately!

Have a safe and happy holiday neighbors!

Children

- If possible, leave small children at home with a trusted babysitter when going out shopping.
- Teach your child to go to a store clerk and ask for help in case your child is separated from you.
- Teach children to stay close to you at all times while shopping.
- Never allow children to make unaccompanied trips to the restroom.
- Children should never be allowed to go to the car alone and they should never be left alone in the car.
- Teach children their full name, address and telephone number to give to police officers or mall security. Teach children to immediately inform you if a stranger is bothering them.

Home

- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave the house, even for a few minutes.
- When leaving home for an extended time, have a neighbor or family member watch your house and pick up your newspapers and mail.
- Indoor and outdoor lights should be on an automatic timer.
- Leave a radio or television on so the house looks and sounds occupied.
- Large displays of holiday gifts should not be visible through the windows and doors of your home.
- When setting up a Christmas tree or other holiday display, make sure doors and passageways are clear inside your home.
- Be sure your Christmas tree is mounted on a sturdy base so children, elderly persons or family pets cannot pull it over on themselves.
- If you use lights on your Christmas tree ensure the wiring is not damaged or frayed. Frayed or damaged wiring can cause a fire.
- Never place wrapping paper in your fireplace.

Strangers at Your Door

- Be aware that criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts.
- It is not uncommon for criminals to take advantage of the generosity of people during the holiday season by soliciting donations door-to-door

- for charitable causes although no charity is involved.
- Ask for their identification, and find out how the donated funds will be used. If you are not satisfied, do not donate.
 - Donate to a recognized charitable organization.

Shopping

- Be alert and aware of your surroundings at all times. Criminals often target people who are distracted.
- When driving, keep your doors locked and the windows closed. Make sure the gas tank is full. Maintain your car in good working order to avoid breakdowns.
- Always lock your car. Before getting into your car, check the back seat to make sure no one is hiding there.
- Avoid leaving valuables in your car. Whenever possible, place items out of sight in the trunk of your vehicle prior to reaching your destination. Never leave packages in the passenger compartment unattended.
- Plan your purchases in advance and carry only the amount of cash or number of credit cards necessary to make the purchase. If you must carry a large sum of money, divide the cash between your purse, pockets and wallet.
- Cancel credit cards you don't use and keep a record of the account numbers for each credit card you possess. This will facilitate reporting the theft or loss of the cards.
- Carry your purse close to your body. Place one end of the purse in the palm of your hand and the other in the bend of the elbow. Never wrap the strap around your body.
- If you are carrying a wallet, carry it in the breast pocket of your jacket or in your side pants pocket. The rear pants pocket is the easiest to pick.
- When in a restaurant, don't leave your handbag over the back of your chair or on the floor. Don't leave belongings unattended.
- Don't wait until you have reached your front door to look for your keys. Have them ready in your hand. If a stranger is standing near your door, it may be a good idea not to go in until the situation feels safer.
- Lock your front door and/or door leading to your garage immediately upon entering your home.
- If you have elderly family members or neighbors, please remember to check in on them.
- Remind children to be wary of strangers, including those on the internet.
- Be wary of con artists. Con artists use a number of ploys to trick you and steal your property. Some divert your attention while another picks your pocket, some pose as utility workers or as a trades person to gain access to the inside of your home, while others conduct scams that are more elaborate involving several con artists.
- Be wary of telephone and email solicitations asking for personal information about your accounts, passwords or social security number.

More Tips from National Safety Council

<http://www.nsc.org/learn/safety-knowledge/Pages/news-and-resources-holiday-safety.aspx>