

Holiday Shopping Crime Prevention Tips

- *HAVE A PLAN.* This will help you stay mentally alert to your surroundings and you will not have to think about too many things at once.
- *BE PATIENT.* Your shopping plan should include a healthy dose of patience and extra time. If you find yourself rushing or becoming impatient, take a break and review your plan. This will help you maintain your focus on your surroundings.
- *MAKE SURE ALL OF YOUR VEHICLE DOORS ARE LOCKED AND WINDOWS CLOSED WHEN YOU LEAVE IT.* Too often, thieves simply open an unlocked door to gain access to the vehicle interior and the gifts.
- *LOCK YOUR PACKAGES OUT OF SITE IN THE VEHICLE TRUNK.* When packages are in “plain-view” in the vehicle interior, the risk of theft increases. When leaving one retail location to drive to another, place your packages in the trunk BEFORE you leave. Don’t place them in the trunk upon arrival at your next destination because a criminal may be watching.
- *AVOID PARKING IN REMOTE AREAS OF LOTS. AT NIGHT, PARK IN WELL-ILLUMINATED AREAS.* Pay attention to any suspicious person loitering in the area.
- *AVOID CARRYING LARGE AMOUNTS OF CASH.* Pay with a check or credit card when possible. You should know how to notify your credit/debit card issuer immediately should your card be lost or stolen while you are shopping.
- *PAY EXTRA ATTENTION TO YOUR PURSE, WALLET AND CHECKBOOK.* Pickpockets prey on shoppers during the holiday season and they do not care about their victims or their financial loss.
- *AVOID OVERLOADING YOURSELF WITH PACKAGES.* You need clear visibility and freedom of movement to prevent a “snatch and run” of your wallet, purse, checkbook or packages by a criminal.
- *TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO ASK A STORE CLERK FOR HELP IF YOU BECOME SEPARATED.* They should never go to the parking lot or to the car alone.
- *IF YOU ARE WAITING FOR A RIDE FROM A FRIEND OR BY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, WAIT IN WELL-ILLUMINATED AREAS OR BY OTHER PEOPLE.* Avoid distractions and stay focused on your surroundings.
- *REPORT THEFTS, OTHER CRIMES AND SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES TO THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY.*

For additional information contact John Justin, St. Cloud Police Crime Prevention Unit at (320) 650-3682