

## Holiday Safety Tips

### Overview

Take a moment to go over some safety tips before the hustle and bustle of the holiday season. During the days before the holidays, you will have more valuables in your home than usual. Remember that you aren't the only one doing your holiday shopping at this time of year. Burglars and thieves are always on the lookout for a good "bargain" too. Protect your home, yourself and your family.

### At Home

Many people like to keep their presents or gifts displayed in the home before and after the holidays. It gives most of us a warm feeling to enjoy the holidays this way. However, the time we spend shopping and visiting makes our houses vulnerable during the holiday season.

- Don't keep presents near windows where they can be seen from the street, especially after they've been unwrapped.
- Never hide presents in the garage! Garage locks are usually the weakest locks you have. A second story closet or attic equipped with a good lock is usually your safest storage area.
- Break up boxes, especially for purchases like TV's, stereos, or electronic equipment and put them in garbage bags or the recycling.

### Handling Money

The tendency to carry large amounts of cash is greater during the holidays than any other season of the year. Use checks or credit cards whenever possible. But if you must use cash:

- Don't leave cash lying around the house. Keep all money in a safe place.
- Plan your shopping so that you only take approximately the amount of money you're going to spend.
- Don't flash your money in public. Keep your bills flat in a wallet so that you can count them without taking them out of your wallet.
- Don't carry a purse. Keep your wallet and keys in your pants or inside coat pocket.

### Your Car

Holiday purchases left unattended on the back seat of your car invite theft.

- Never leave your car unlocked!
- Pick up major items at the end, rather than the beginning of a shopping trip.

- Lock all purchases in the trunk of your car, or as a last resort, under a blanket on the car floor. If you do this and plan to go back inside the store for more shopping, move your vehicle – someone may have watched you put items in the trunk.
- Immediately remove all purchases from your car when you return home.

### Getting Deliveries

Packages left on door steps are even easier to steal than those left in cars. Don't give a thief an easy opportunity.

- Schedule deliveries for times when you're at home.
- If you can't be home when deliveries are made, make arrangements to have your parcels delivered to a neighbor.
- If possible, have your packages delivered to your workplace.
- Pick your package up from the store that you made the purchase.
- If you are unable to do the above suggestions, ask that the package be kept at the delivery facility to pick up on your time schedule.
- If you or your neighbors observe any delivery person doing anything that appears to be suspicious, call 911 immediately!

### When Away From Home

- If you leave your home for the holidays (or any time of year) for any length of time between 1 or 31 days, call the Saint Paul Police Department Community Services Unit at 651-266-5485 and ask for a Vacation Watch. Reserve Officers who are trained civilians, can be assigned to check on your house while you are away.
- Tell a trusted neighbor how long you'll be gone and where you can be reached. Ask them to check your house every day and call 911 if they observe anyone/anything suspicious while you are away.
- Leave lights and radios or televisions on timers or ask your neighbor to switch them on and off periodically.
- Ask a neighbor to park their car in your driveway to make it appear someone is home.
- Arrange to have your grass cut or sidewalks shoveled while away
- Have your US postal mail held at the post office.
- Ask a neighbor to pick up any newspapers or items left on your doorsteps.