Holiday Crime Prevention Tips

presented by:

CPTC
'Tis the season to be jolly, but it is also the season to be wary of burglars, thieves, pickpockets, and other holiday grinches.
Nothing can ruin the Christmas spirit faster than becoming the victim of a crime.
Unfortunately burglars view the holiday season a little differently...for them, it is a time of opportunity to burglarize your home for cash, credit cards, and gifts.
Protecting Your Home

The following are a few strategies that will help you enjoy the holidays without incident.
Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave your house or apartment, even for a few minutes.
Protecting Your Home

Don’t openly display your Christmas tree and gifts in the front window so it’s easily visible from the street. It’s too tempting for a potential criminal to smash the window and grab the wrapped packages, or plan a later break-in based on their earlier observation.
Don’t advertise ... Burglars look for occupancy cues like outdoor lights burning 24 hours a day, piled up newspapers, mail, or advertising flyers hanging on the door knob.
Protecting Your Home

Use an inexpensive light timer when you are away and ask a neighbor to pick up your newspapers and mail.
If you go out for the evening, turn on lights and a radio or television so the house or apartment appears to be occupied.
Burglars know to look for the hidden door key near the front entrance. Don’t hide spare keys under rocks, in flowerpots, or above door ledges. Instead give the spare key to a trusted neighbor.
Burglars prefer to enter through unlocked doors or windows. A holiday problem can occur when exterior Christmas light extension cords are run inside through a window and prevent it from being secured.
Don’t post your family name on your mailbox or on your house. A burglar can call directory assistance to get your telephone number and call your home while in front of your house to confirm that you are away.
Don’t leave descriptive telephone answering machine messages like, “You’ve reached the Wilson’s...we’re away skiing for the Christmas holidays...please leave a message.” Bad guys love to hear that they have plenty of time to break in and completely ransack your home.
Protecting Your Home

After Christmas day, don’t pile up empty gift boxes from your new computer, DVD player, or stereo receiver on the street for the garbage man. Burglars appreciate knowing that you have expensive gifts inside for them to steal. Break the boxes down or cut them up to conceal the items better.
Christmas is a time of year during which many of us will be busy shopping and running errands in order to be ready for the Holiday Celebration. We must not forget that criminals will also be out and about looking for easy targets to make a big score.
Even though you are rushed and thinking about a thousand things, stay alert to your surroundings.
Shopping Prevention Tips

Shop before dark if possible. Coordinate shopping trips with a friend. *Never* park in an unlit lot or area, no matter how convenient it is.
Lock your packages and gifts in your vehicle's trunk. Keep your vehicle's doors locked and windows closed. This is especially relevant for SUVs.
Have your keys readily available in your hand before you go to your car.
When you return to your vehicle, scan the interior of your car to be sure no one is hiding inside. Check to see if you are being followed.
Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. Pay for purchases with a check, credit card, or debit card when possible.
To discourage purse-snatchers, don't overburden yourself with packages. Have your purchases delivered whenever practical.
Be extra careful with purses and wallets. Carry a purse under your arm. Keep a wallet in an inside jacket pocket, not a back trouser pocket.
Shopping Prevention Tips

Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason. At this time of year, "con-artists" may try various methods of distracting you with the intention of taking your money or belongings.
Shopping on the Internet can be economical and convenient. Shopping on the Internet is no less safe than shopping in a store or by mail. To help ensure that your online shopping experience is a safe one:
Shopping on the Internet

Know who you’re dealing with. Confirm the online seller’s physical address and phone number in case you have questions or problems.
Anyone can set up shop online under almost any name. Confirm the online seller’s physical address and phone number in case you have questions or problems.
If you get an email or pop-up message while you’re browsing that asks for financial information, don’t reply or click on the link in the message. Legitimate companies don’t ask for this information via email.
Shopping on the Internet

Know exactly what you’re buying. Read the seller’s description of the product closely, especially the fine print.
Shopping on the Internet

Words like “refurbished,” “vintage,” or “close-out” may indicate that the product is in less-than-mint condition, while name-brand items with “too good to be true” prices could be counterfeits.
Shopping on the Internet

Know what it will cost. Factor shipping and handling — along with your needs and budget — into the total cost of the order.
Check out websites that offer price comparisons and then compare “apples to apples.” Do not send cash under any circumstances.
Shopping on the Internet

Pay by credit or charge card for maximum consumer protections.
Only shop on secure sites; before submitting card details ensure that the locked padlock or unbroken key symbol is showing in your browser. (The locked padlock symbol is usually found at the top of the screen if you use Internet Explorer 7 or Firefox 2.)
The beginning of the online retailer’s internet address will change from ‘http’ to ‘https’ when a connection is secure. In some new browsers, such as Internet Explorer 7 and Firefox 2, the address bar may also turn green to indicate that a site has an additional level of security.
If you pay by credit or charge card online, your transaction will be protected by the Fair Credit Billing Act. Under this law, you have the right to dispute charges under certain circumstances and temporarily withhold payment while the creditor is investigating them.
Never disclose your PIN to anyone and never send it over the Internet.
Click on the security icon to ensure that the retailer has a valid encryption certificate. The address on the certificate should match the primary address in the address bar, e.g. www.amazon.co.uk. This certificate should explain the type and extent of the security and the encryption the site uses.
Shopping on the Internet

Make sure all your cards are registered for MasterCard SecureCode and Verified by Visa, and use the services where available.
Increasingly, when you go to pay online with your card you will be given the option of signing up to these schemes that involve your using a password. By signing up, you will prevent a fraudster using your card details on participating sites as they will not know your password.
In the event of unauthorized use of your credit or charge card, you generally would be held liable only for the first $50 in charges.
Some companies offer an online shopping guarantee that ensures you will not be held responsible for any unauthorized charges made online, and some cards may provide additional warranty, return, and/or purchase protection benefits.
Check out the terms of the deal, like refund policies and delivery dates.
Can you return the item for a full refund if you’re not satisfied? If you return it, find out who pays the shipping costs or restocking fees, and when you will receive your order. A Federal Trade Commission (FTC) rule requires sellers to ship items as promised or within 30 days after the order date if no specific date is promised.
Print and save records of your online transactions.
Print and save records of your online transactions, including the product description and price, the online receipt, and copies of every email you send or receive from the seller. Read your credit card statements as you receive them and be on the lookout for unauthorized charges.
And Remember...

NEVER DRINK AND DRIVE
HO..HO..Ho..

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from your friends at CPTC!!!