



CITY OF PALMDALE

Holiday Safety Tips

'Tis the season to shop!

The City of Palmdale's Department of Neighborhood Services would like to provide you with some tips to increase your safety during the holiday season.

Everyone knows with the holidays upon us that shopping is in the air; unfortunately crime is too. Criminals prey upon unsuspecting people rushing about, distracted by the never-ending list of things to do and buy.

Here are a few tips to help you avoid becoming a victim of crime:



WHILE SHOPPING

- Be prepared – always be alert and aware of people around you. Be aware of locations and situations which would make you vulnerable to crime.
- Whenever possible, shop with a friend.
- Do not carry cash – it cannot be replaced if lost or stolen.
- Carry only the credit cards you will be using.
- Keep your purse on your person at all times. Do not leave it unsecured in a shopping cart. Men should carry their wallet in a front pocket.
- Do not overload yourself with packages.

IN THE PARKING LOT

- Stay in well-lighted areas.
- Walk close to the curb. Avoid doorways and bushes where someone could hide.
- Walk confidently and at a steady pace.
- Make eye contact with people when walking.
- Do not respond to conversation from strangers on the street; continue walking.
- If you carry a purse, hold it securely between your arm and body.
- Always lock your car doors after entering or leaving your car.
- Park carefully in well lit areas around other vehicles – your personal safety is more important than the paint on your car.

IN THE PARKING LOT

- Have your car keys in your hand so you do not have to linger before entering your car.
- Check the backseat before entering your car.
- If you think you are being followed, drive or walk to a public place with a lot of people around.
- Put gifts, bags and packages in the trunk and out of sight or cover them with a blanket so they are not visible.
- Move your vehicle to another location in the parking lot after putting packages inside. Anyone that may have been watching will assume you have left the shopping center.
- Use anti-theft devices on your vehicle.
- If someone is threatening you with a weapon, give up your car, purse or other valuables – it's not worth your life.
- If you leave a store or work late, find another worker or security guard to walk out with you.
- Report all suspicious people and activities to the proper authorities.

AT HOME

- Gifts should not be visible from a window.
- Tear down boxes of electronics and valuable gifts before putting them in the trash. You do not want to advertise what is available in your home should someone break-in.
- Remember basic home security measures such as keeping doors and windows locked at all times.
- Brightly illuminate all entrances, preferably with vandal-proof fixtures.
- Use timers that automatically turn on interior home lights at dusk, particularly if you are going to be away at that time.
- Leave a radio on with the volume turned low when leaving home, even for short periods.

WHEN LEAVING HOME FOR SEVERAL DAYS

- Leave a key with a friend or neighbor; ask that the house be checked periodically.
- Have the drapes periodically opened and closed; and have different lights turned on and off so the house appears occupied.
- Ask a neighbor to pick up your mail or newspaper if you choose not to stop service.
- Leave a car in the driveway, or ask neighbors to park in it.

If a crime occurs – report it!

Everyone should consider it his or her responsibility to report crime.

Many criminals target favorite areas and have predictable methods of operation. When you report all the facts about a crime, it helps the Sheriff's Department assign deputies in places where crime is occurring or where it is most likely to occur.

At least one out of two crimes in the United States goes unreported, either because people do not think law enforcement can do anything about it, or because they do not want to get involved. If you don't report crime, the criminal can continue to operate without interference.

So tell law enforcement as much as you can; no fact is too trivial. They need the eyes and ears of everyone.



Department of Neighborhood Services

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