

NEWS RELEASE



GARDEN CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT
349 Stewart Avenue, Garden City, NY 11530
(516) 465-4100 FAX (516) 742-3898

The holiday season is always a special time of year. It is also a time when busy people become preoccupied and vulnerable to theft and other holiday crime. We can never be too careful, too prepared or too aware. The Garden City Police Department wishes you a safe, happy and peaceful holiday season and offers the following tips:

DRIVING

- If you must shop at night, park in a well-lit area.
- Avoid parking next to vans, trucks with camper shells, or cars with tinted windows.
- Park as close as you can to your destination and take notice of where you parked.
- Never leave your car unoccupied with the motor running or with children inside.
- Do not leave packages or valuables on the seat of your car. This creates a temptation for thieves. If you must leave something in the car, lock it in the trunk or put it out of sight.
- Keep a secure hold on your purse, handbag and parcels. Do not put them down or on top of the car in order to open the door.
- When approaching or leaving your vehicle, be aware of your surroundings.
- Do not approach your car alone if there are suspicious people in the area. Ask mall or store security for an escort before leaving your shopping location.
- Do not roll down your windows if approached by a stranger; talk through the glass or drive away.

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, mail or deliveries.
- Indoor and outdoor lights should be on an automatic timer; leave a radio or television on so the house looks and sounds occupied.
- Gifts should not be visible through the windows and doors of your home.
- Be aware that criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts.

LEAVING HOME

- Plan your trip carefully and avoid getting lost by knowing the routes you will be taking. Tell someone when and where you are going, as well as what time you expect to return home.
- When leaving home, leave interior and exterior lights on and activate your alarm system. Be aware of anyone watching or following you when you leave.
- Ensure your car has a full tank of gas and keep your doors locked and windows closed.

AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE (ATM)

- If you must use an ATM, choose one that is at a well-lighted location. Withdraw only the amount of cash you need.
- Protect your PIN by shielding the ATM keypad from anyone who is standing near you.
- Do not throw your ATM receipt away at the ATM location.

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SHOPPING

Shop during daylight hours whenever possible. If you must shop at night, go with a friend or family member.

Dress casually and comfortably; avoid wearing expensive jewelry.

Do not carry a purse or wallet, if possible.

Even though you are rushed and thinking about a thousand things, stay alert to your surroundings.

Avoid carrying large amounts of cash; pay for purchases with a check or credit card when possible.

Keep cash in your front pocket.

Notify the credit card issuer immediately if your credit card is lost, stolen or misused.

Keep a record of all of your credit card numbers in a safe place at home.

Be extra careful if you do carry a wallet or purse. They are the prime targets of criminals in crowded shopping areas.

Avoid overloading yourself with packages. It is important to have clear visibility and freedom of motion to avoid mishaps.

Be sure to locate your keys prior to going to your car.

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.

Many car fobs today have a panic button which causes the vehicle to emit a loud piercing sound. If you have one, be prepared to use it if you feel threatened.

When leaving the shopping center, check to see if someone is following you. If so, call 911 if you have a cell phone or drive directly to a Police Station or to a highly visible public area where other people are present.

CHILDREN

If possible, leave small children at home with a trusted babysitter or family member.

Teach children to stay close to you at all times while shopping.

Teach your child to go to a store clerk and ask for help in case your child is separated from you.

Never allow children to make unaccompanied trips to the restroom.

Children should never be allowed to go to the car alone and 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.