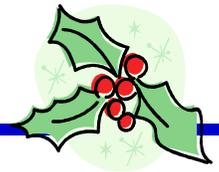


# San Leandro Police Department

## HOLIDAY CRIME PREVENTION TIPS



Unfortunately, the holiday season provides more opportunities for criminals looking to celebrate at someone else's expense. Here are a few tips on how to make it more difficult for those individuals who are looking to illegally benefit from the holiday season:

### **These are a few precautions you can take to make your home less inviting to criminals:**

- Do not place packages or gifts where they are visible through your windows.
- Always lock doors and windows whenever you leave your home, even if you will only be gone a few minutes.
- If you are out for the evening, it's a good idea to leave a light or two on so it gives the appearance that someone may be home.
- Many con artists will take advantage of holiday generosity by soliciting for monetary donations door-to-door. Ask the individual to leave information outside your door. If they are representing a legitimate charity, they will have no problem doing that.
- Turn on outside lights to deter burglars.



### **When you are out shopping, it's a good idea to remember the following:**

- Always be aware of your surroundings whether you're in a parking lot or inside a store/mall.
- Park in well-lit areas as close to the store as possible. Hide your packages in the trunk or under the seats of your vehicle and lock the car doors.
- Don't fumble for your keys while standing by your car in the parking lot. Have them ready before you leave the store and do not overload yourself with packages so you are an easy target.
- Do not carry a large amount of cash with you and keep your purse close to your body at all times.
- Notify the credit card issuer immediately if your credit card is lost, stolen or misused.

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## **HOLIDAY SHOPPING TIPS**

- Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- Be extra careful if you do carry a wallet or purse. They are the prime targets of criminals in crowded shopping areas, transportation terminals, bus stops, on buses and other rapid transit.
- Keep a record of all of your credit card numbers in a safe place at home.
- Although stores are open much later in the evening during the holiday season, try to shop during daylight hours whenever possible. If you must shop late at night, go with a friend or family member.
- Avoid parking next to vans, trucks with camper shells, or cars with tinted windows.
- 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.



### **Here are a few things to remember when you're in public places with your children:**

- If older children become separated from you while shopping or at a public event, make sure you have a pre-designated spot to meet such as an information booth. Never have them meet you in a parking lot by your car.
- Always make sure young children are with you at all times in public facilities and always accompany them to the restroom.
- Teach children to look for police officers or security personnel if they are lost or need any type of assistance. Also make sure they know not to speak to strangers.
- If you allow your older children to go shopping or to other activities without you, they should always go with at least one friend. Make sure you know exactly where they are going and when they will be returning home. Also, confirm that any change in plans must be approved by you in advance.
- It is very easy to get distracted by all the holiday noise, decorations and crowds. It is essential to pay close attention to the whereabouts of your children as they can wander off and disappear in a crowd in a moment's notice.

### **Shopping online:**

- Shopping online is certainly not limited to the holiday season. However, during our haste to get our shopping done, we might not be as wary of online scams.
- Make sure your computer has updated security software that should include antivirus software, antispyware, and antispyam software.
- Use only secure websites for purchases. Look for the icon of a locked padlock at the bottom of the screen or “https” in the URL address.
- Keep your personal information private and your password secure. Do not respond to any requests to “verify” your password or credit card information unless you initiated the contact.
- Beware of bargains from unfamiliar companies. Remember — if an offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is!
- Donate to charities online only if you have investigated the charity. Be sure that the charity's site is secure or make your donation through the mail.
- If you are making purchases through online auction sites, make sure you know all the rules and policies of the sites before finalizing your purchase.



These tips may take a little of your time and some of your energy; however, a few simple precautions may prevent you from becoming the victim of a crime and keep your holiday season full of joy.