



Holiday Crime Prevention Tips

To avoid becoming a victim of a thief, burglar, or pickpocket, the Bremerton Police Department offers these tips to help you avoid becoming a victim of crime during the Holiday season:

Protecting Your Home

- Burglars view the Holiday season as a time of opportunity to burglarize homes for cash, credit cards, and gifts.
- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave your house or apartment; even if it is just for a few minutes.
- If you display a Christmas tree, do not display it and gifts in the front window so they are easily visible from the street. It is too tempting for a potential criminal to smash a window and grab the wrapped packages; or plan a later break-in based on their earlier observations.
- Don't advertise – burglars look for occupancy cues like outdoor lights burning 24 hours a day, piled up newspapers, mail, or advertising fliers hanging on door knobs. Use an inexpensive light timer when you are away, and ask a neighbor to pick up your mail and newspapers.
- 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. DO NOT hide spare keys under rocks, in flowerpots, under door mats, or above door ledges. *Instead, give the spare key to a trusted neighbor.*
- Burglars prefer to enter through unlocked doors or windows. A problem can occur if you display exterior Holiday lighting, and the extension cords are run inside through a window that prevents 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 home to confirm that you are away.
- Don't leave descriptive messages on your telephone answering machine such as: "You have reached the Joneses; we are away skiing for the Holidays." Burglars like to hear that they have plenty of time to break in and completely ransack your home.

- If you celebrate Christmas, after Christmas Day, do not pile up empty gift boxes such as, from your new computer, DVD player, or stereo receiver on the street for the garbage collectors. Burglars appreciate knowing that you have expensive gifts inside for them to steal. Break the boxes down or cut them up to better conceal the items.

Shopping Prevention Tips

- The Holiday season is a time when many people will be busy shopping and running errands in preparation for the season. Criminals will also be out and about looking for easy targets and to make a big score.
- Even though you may be rushed and have many things on your mind, stay alert to your surroundings.
- 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.
- Remove **all** valuables from your vehicle. Keep your vehicle's doors **locked** and windows **closed**; this is especially relevant for SUV's.
- 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 purchase(s) 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. Do not leave purses or handbags unattended in a shopping cart.
- Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason. During this time of year, con-artists may try various methods of distracting you with the intention of taking your money and/or belongings.
- Be careful of Holiday scams. Scammers try to take advantage of online shoppers to steal their identity, make bogus gift offers, or pose as a charity. Do not give out any personal information, credit card information, and do not open e-mails or click links from people you do not know.

AND REMEMBER.....DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE!