



Loudoun County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH NEWSLETTER

Inside this issue:

Holiday Burglary Pre.	1
Holiday Charity Scams	2
Shopping Safety	2



Holiday Burglary Prevention

As we enter the holiday season we must keep in mind that criminals are still around and will prey on the unprepared. To help prepare citizens for the potential criminal behaviors that are common this time of year this article will focus on home security.

Criminals, especially burglars, rely on our predictable behavior to ensure the success of their crime. This behavior can put us at risk and increase our chances of being victimized. To help prepare citizens for the holiday and help break the routine, here are some tips for the community that relate specifically to Burglary Prevention.

- Unsecured windows are an easy target for burglars. Do not run lighting cords or extension through any window you cannot 100% secure.
- Burglars will watch holiday related trash for indication on what gifts may have been received. Cut up all boxes and packaging with identifying panels and bag them in dark colored trash

bags.

- Don't give burglars the chance to dumpster dive. Wait until the morning of trash pick-up to set your trash out.
- Place your holiday lighting on timers so they go on and off on their own. A sure sign that no one is home are holiday lights turned off when they have normally been turned on.
- Try to keep gift boxes out of sight. If a burglar can see the gifts around the tree, it may be just the opportunity they were looking for.
- Do not leave gifts locked in your car. Your car is more easily broken into than your home. Find a good hiding place in your home and use it.

Important Numbers:

Emergency 911

Non-Emergency

703-777-1021
703-777-0445

Poison Control

1-800-222-1222

Animal Control

703-777-0406

Sheriffs Office Admin

703-771-0407

Narcotic Tip Line

703-779-0552

Crime Solvers

703-777-1919

WARNING



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

WE ARE WATCHING TO REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY OR PERSONS

TO

LOUDOUN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



Frequently Asked Questions

If you would like to have a question answered, please e-mail the question to **Nathaniel.Payne@loudoun.gov** or **James.Spurlock@loudoun.gov**

Holiday Charity Scams

The holiday season will bring out all types of criminals. Some will prey upon your good nature to steal monies and information from unsuspecting citizens. There are so many reputable charities that seek donations this time of year that the criminals can easily hide in the mix. A few tips for donating this time of year.

- Do research on the charity you intend to donate to. Find out how the monies will be used.
-www.give.org
- Do not provide personal information to charities. This information is often not secured and can easily be stolen and used in identity thefts.

- Do not use credit cards or checks. Use money orders made out to the specific charity by name. This protects your personal information and only allows the charity to deposit the donation.
- Be sure to get a receipt.
- DO NOT donate to door-to-door solicitors before gathering more information. Get the charities information and decide after doing some research.
- Follow your instinct, if something doesn't sound right, don't donate. Call the Sheriff's Office immediately and let us check it

out, especially with solicitors.

- If you feel compelled to donate on impulse, such as at business entrances, have your money ready before you get there. Don't dig inside a wallet or purse looking through your cash. Other types of criminals may be watching looking



Shopping Safety

Holiday shopping is off and running. This time of year many of us will be distracted by the holiday spirit and criminals will be betting on that distraction. Here are a few tips to keep you safer while you spread the holiday cheer in your local business of choice.

- Do not carry a purse unless absolutely necessary. Take your credit cards, identification, and a small amount of pocket cash and keep it on your person in a pocket.
- If you make purchases in cash try to be observant to who may be close by watching you as you count out your purchase cost.
- If you use credit cards, keep ALL receipts, even for Debit Purchases.
- Do not keep excessive numbers of gifts stored in your vehicle while you shop.
- Keep an eye out as you go to and from your vehicle. Are you seeing the same car or persons at different stores? Does it appear that they may be following you?
- DO NOT purchase multiple "high end" electronics in a single shopping day. This attracts attention and leaving them in the car while you continue to shop is very risky.
- If you must secure shopping items in your vehicle, do so by placing them in the trunk. This makes them less visible and harder for a thief to get to in order to take them.
- Lastly, TRUST YOUR INSTINCT! If it looks like something is wrong then make the call. Sheriff's Office Non-Emergency: **703-777-1021**.

