

# Office of Community Policing

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Your Partners for Safe Neighborhoods*

## HOLIDAY SEASON SAFETY TIPS

The holiday season should be a time of great joy as we celebrate and share gifts with those close to us. Unfortunately, it can be a time when crime becomes more prevalent. These tips are offered to help make your holiday season a safe and happy one. Please take some time to read and share them with your family and friends.

**~~ Be alert:** Walk confidently, with your head up, and stay in well-lit and well-traveled areas. Pay attention to people walking in front of and behind you. Pay particular attention when you are in crowded areas, such as buses, trains or malls and stores that are filled with other shoppers. Places with large crowds are favorites for thieves and pickpockets.

If you carry a purse, keep it in front of you and close to your body. You can do this by covering the flap or clasp with your hand or forearm. Never leave your purse in the shopping cart or on a counter while you pay for your purchases. Remember not to carry open-weave bags or purses without zippers or flaps. Those items are easy marks for pickpockets. If you carry a change purse or wallet, keep it in your front pants pocket or in the inside breast pocket of your coat. Always be alert when opening your purse or wallet.

Try to shop with friends or relatives. Not only is there safety in numbers, but shopping in a group will give you a chance to catch up on things and renew friendships.

**~~ Be discreet:** never carry large amounts of money. Whenever possible, use debit or credit cards or checks instead of cash. When using debit or credit cards, make sure that only one slip is printed with your card.

Thieves and pickpockets are also more likely to be attracted by expensive clothes and jewelry. When you are out doing your holiday shopping, dress comfortably and casually.

**~~ Secure your car:** Cars can be an easy target for criminals. Park your car as close to your destination as possible and in a well-lit area. When you do your shopping remember to store your packages in the trunk of the car and not on the back seat. Also, if you take packages to the car but plan to return to the store or mall, drive your car to a new location within the parking lot. Criminals can be on the lookout for unsuspecting shoppers who simply drop their purchases into the trunk and then return to keep shopping.

**~~ Secure your home:** When you are out shopping, leave some lights on at home. You may also want to let a neighbor know that you will be out of the house for a short time, so they can watch your house for you. If you plan to be away for a longer period to visit friends or family over the holidays, make sure to tell a neighbor or friend who can keep an eye on your house. Have them check periodically to make sure packages that may have been delivered while you were gone aren't sitting on your porch.

*The Chicago Police Department wants to make sure that this holiday season is a safe one for all of Chicago's residents and hopes that these tips will help achieve that goal. If you need more information getting involved in keeping your neighborhood safe, call 311, Chicago's Other Helpline, or visit the Department's website at [www.chicagopolice.org](http://www.chicagopolice.org)*



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