

## Safety Tips for the Holiday Season

'Tis a joyous season, but it is also the season to be wary of burglars, thieves, con-artists and other holiday grinchers. Nothing can ruin the holiday spirit faster than becoming a victim of crime.



The Battle Ground Police Department wishes you a safe and happy holiday season and offers these tips and strategies that will help you enjoy the holidays without incident.

### Shopping Safety Tips

It is the time of year when we are busy shopping and running errands in order to be ready for holiday celebrations. We need to be aware that criminals will also be out and about looking for easy targets to make a big score.

- Stay alert to your surroundings at all times and don't get overloaded with too many packages.
- Be extra careful with purses and wallets. Carry a purse under your arm and keep wallets in an inside jacket pocket, not a back trouser pocket.
- Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason. Con-artists may try various methods of distracting you with the intention of taking your money or belongings.
- Avoid talking on your cell phone as you walk through malls and parking lots. It can leave you distracted and vulnerable.
- Always park in a well-lit and well-traveled area. Be prepared with your car keys in hand so you can enter your vehicle without delay.
- When you are shopping with children, make a plan in case you become separated from each other.
- Never leave packages or valuables in plain sight in your vehicle. If you must store items in your car, the best place is a locked trunk.
- Shop online with companies you know and trust. Check a company's background if you are not familiar with it. Remember, if it is too good to be true, it usually is.

- Use a credit card instead of a debit card when making online purchases. It is much easier to cancel a credit card if an account number is illegally obtained.
- Check your mail daily and make sure all packages left at the doorstep are retrieved immediately.

### Protecting your Home

Unfortunately, burglars view the holiday season a little differently. For them, it is a time of opportunity to burglarize your home for cash, credit cards, and gifts.

- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows, even if you plan to be out for a short time.
- Leave lights turned on both inside and outside your residence after dark. Criminals do not like bright places.
- Large displays of holiday gifts should not be visible through the windows and doors of your home.
- If you plan on being away for several days, make arrangements for someone to pick up your mail and newspapers.
- Don't leave descriptive voicemail messages like, "You've reached the Smith's.... we're away for a skiing vacation over the holidays!" Bad guys love to hear that they have plenty of time to break into your home.

### Travel & Celebration Safety

We often travel to celebrate the season with friends and family. We want you to get to your destination and back home safe and sound.

- Drive defensively. Traffic is heavier during the holidays and some drivers may be impaired.
- If you are walking or biking in the evening hour, wear reflective clothing.
- Have something to eat before consuming alcoholic beverages.
- Have a designated driver or a taxi cab to ensure safe travels home.
- Know your safe limit and never drink and drive.

