

HOLIDAY SEASON CRIME PREVENTION TIPS

The holidays are a happy time for most of us but for many, holiday shopping is simply a headache. Holiday traffic is always bad, there are long lines at the stores and people are often financially, emotionally, and physically stressed out.

Of course one of the happiest persons this time of year is the criminal opportunist. He/she lies in waiting for us to make simple mistakes that create opportunities for him or her to steal or cause us personal harm. Don't add being the victim of a crime this holiday season to your stress. Follow these simple steps to ensure you and your family is safe during the holidays.

Home Safety and Crime Prevention

- Be extra careful and cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave the house. It only takes a few moments for a burglar to get in and steal your property and gifts.
- Never put large displays of holiday gifts in view of your windows or doors.
- When going on trips or out for the evening, use automatic timers to turn indoor lights on and off. This gives the appearance that someone is home.
- Immediately after the holidays, mark your new gifts with your driver's license, or a personal ID number. This will ensure your property can be identified should it be stolen and recovered. It also makes it more difficult for the criminal to dispose of it.
- Never advertise what you got for Christmas by putting the boxes out on trash day. Break the boxes down or take them to the dump yourself.

Shopping Safety and Crime Prevention

- If you shop at several stores in one day, lock your purchased packages in the trunk of your car.
- Never overload yourself with packages. You make yourself an easy target for a criminal to grab from you and get away.
- If you must shop after dark always have a friend or relative with you.
- Always park in well-lit areas and as close as possible to the entrance of the store. Be particularly aware of persons loitering in the parking lot, especially if they are near your car.
- Always lock your car and make sure all of the windows are closed.
- Carry only the charge cards you will actually need.
- Never carry or flash large sums of cash.
- Women should always carry purses close to their body with the purse flap against them. Men should carry their wallets in the front or inside pockets.
- Always be aware of your surroundings and the people around you. Never allow your attention to become distracted from your purse, packages or your young children.
- Teach your children to go immediately to a store clerk, cashier or security guard and ask for help if you become separated in a store or shopping mall.
- Never hesitate to notify store security if you see suspicious activity.
- If you have to wait for a ride, wait in a busy, well-lighted place.
- If you are a victim of a crime, report it to the Metter Police immediately by calling 911.

The dedicated employees of the Metter Police Department wish you and yours a safe and joyful holiday season!