

## **HOLIDAY CRIME PREVENTION**

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The holiday season has begun and for most of you this is a time for busy schedules, holiday shopping and travel. Unfortunately, this also is a time to be concerned about thefts, burglaries and personal safety. Nothing can ruin the holiday spirit faster than becoming the victim of a crime. By taking a few simple precautions, you can reduce the risk to yourself and also discourage those who commit crime. The following are a few safety tips that will help make your holiday a safe one:

- Always stay alert to your surroundings while in parking lots and entering or exiting stores.
- Park in an area where your car will be viewed easily and frequently. This is best done in well-lighted and well traveled areas.
- Never leave your car unoccupied with the motor running or with children inside. It only takes a few seconds to steal a car.
- Close all windows and lock your vehicle each time you walk away from it. An unlocked vehicle is an open invitation to a thief.
- Do not leave packages or other personal items in plain view in your vehicle. If you must keep packages in your vehicle, lock them in your trunk. If you are close to home, it is wise to drop them off and then return to your shopping. Keep in mind that thieves may watch you place large purchases in your vehicle and then walk away from them.
- If you feel unsafe while exiting a store or returning to your vehicle in a parking lot, return to the store and ask for assistance from security or store personnel.
- If you carry a purse, keep your purse close to you with the zippers or flaps closed so that the contents are not exposed. Never leave a purse or wallet unattended in a shopping cart.
- Be careful when using ATM machines. When possible use them during daylight hours or inside of businesses such as grocery stores. When using them at night, go to ATM's that are in well lit areas. Do not display cash as you walk away. Be sure to secure your money in your pocket or purse while you are still at the ATM.
- Make sure your holiday packages are not visible through the windows of your home.
- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave the house, even for a few minutes
- When traveling for the holidays, have a friend or neighbor watch your house and pick up the mail and newspaper so it doesn't appear vacant. You can also request that your mail and newspaper service be put on hold while you are away.
- Whether you are traveling for extended periods of time throughout the holiday season, or just out for an evening, create the illusion that you are home by using timers on lights, radios or televisions. You can buy an inexpensive timer and place it on a light in your living area or

bedroom area. You can also leave a radio or television on to make your home sound occupied to a stranger that may approach your residence.

- Don't leave messages on your answering machine indicating that you are out of town.

We as the Pleasant Hill Police Department hope the tips provided above will assist you in protecting yourself from becoming the victim of a crime throughout the holiday season and also in your day to day lives. In the event that you see a suspicious person or vehicle in your neighborhood, call the Pleasant Hill Police Department non-emergency line at (925) 288-4600, ext #0. If a break in or crime is in progress call 9-1-1. The Pleasant Hill Police Department wants everyone to have a safe and peaceful holiday season.