



**CANTON POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
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**Crime Prevention Unit**  
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## Tips for a Happy and Safe Holiday

During the year-end holidays, people are often busy, excited and sometimes a little bit careless. The following holiday crime prevention tips can be shared with members of the community as a community relations or community policing effort. They can be included in a flyer, brochure, Internet web page, etc.

### At Home

- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave your house or apartment, even for a few minutes.
- Don't display holiday gifts where they can be seen from a window or doorway. Store gifts before you go away on a holiday trip.
- If you go out for the evening, turn on lights and a radio or television so the house or apartment appears to be occupied.
- If you take a holiday trip away from your home, have some interior lights activated by an automatic timer. Have a neighbor or family member watch your house, shovel new snow, pick up the mail and newspaper and park his or her motor vehicle in your driveway from time to time.
- Participate in Operation Identification and mark your valuables with a unique identification number.
- Be wary of strangers soliciting for charitable donations. They may attempt to take advantage of people's generosity during the holidays. Ask for identification, how donated funds are used, if contributions are tax deductible, etc. If you aren't satisfied with the answers, don't give.
- Immediately after the holidays, mark new gifts with an identification number and record new serial numbers.
- Test your smoke detectors.
- Use only fire resistant ornaments on a holiday tree and make sure electric lights are in good working order. Don't leave the lights on overnight or when you are away from home.
- If you have house guests, advise them of your security precautions and make sure they follow them.
- Avoid leaving boxes from purchases (especially TV's, VCR's, computer, etc.) out on the curb for trash pickup.

### Shopping

- Shop before dark if possible. Possibly coordinate shopping trips with a friend. Never park in an unlit lot or area, no matter how convenient it is.

- Lock your packages and gifts in your vehicle's trunk. Keep your vehicle's doors locked and windows closed.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. Pay for purchases with a check, credit card, or debit card when possible.
- To discourage purse-snatchers, don't overburden yourself with packages. Have your purchases delivered whenever practical.
- Be extra careful with purses and wallets. Carry a purse under your arm. Keep a wallet in an inside jacket pocket, not a back trouser pocket.
- Teach children to go to a store clerk or security guard and ask for help if you become separated. They should never go into a parking lot alone.

## **Holiday Party Safety**

- Have non-alcoholic beverages available for party guests.
- Serve something to eat before serving alcoholic beverages. High protein foods stay in the stomach longer and slow absorption of alcohol into the system.
- Have alternative transportation for intoxicated persons. Don't let guests drink and drive.

## **Pickpockets**

Pickpockets like to take advantage of crowds in stores, on the street and on public transportation. Many work in teams with one distracting the victim while the other does the actual pickpocketing. Beware of anyone who jostles you. It may be accidental but, then again, it may not. For women who carry a purse, one that has a flap which folds over the opening and fastens at the bottom is preferable to one that can be opened simply by turning a clasp at the top. Men who carry wallets or a money clip should keep them in inner or side pockets rather than rear trouser pockets.