

## Police offer holiday safety tips

With Thanksgiving upon us and Christmas just around the corner, the Shreveport Police Department would like to remind everyone of a few crime prevention tips as part of our ongoing commitment to keep our city safe. Working together, we can make Shreveport an even safer place to live, learn, work, worship and play. Happy Holidays!!

### When Shopping:

Always be **ALERT** and **AWARE** of your surroundings. Pay attention to who is around you and what is going on. Don't leave a building or your vehicle until you have ensured all is secure and safe. Take 60 seconds to drive around those parking lots and look for anything out of the ordinary or suspicious before you pull into that closest parking space. Trust your gut instinct- if you feel uncomfortable with a place or person, leave the area immediately..if something looks suspicious to you, that's probably because it is.

**CALL YOUR POLICE DEPARTMENT!!** We all know to call 911 in case of an emergency, but what if you need the police in a non-emergency situation?? What if you see something suspicious that might not qualify as an emergency and want to report it? Do you know what number to call?? Program the Shreveport Police Department's non-emergency number (318-673-BLUE(2583) extension 3) into your cell phone.

Park in a well lit area.

Remember to **always lock your vehicle!!** Keep vehicle doors locked and windows rolled up while you are in it and especially when you are not! Thieves are typically opportunists who are looking for an easy target and anything you can do to deter them from choosing your car, the better.

Minimize the number of valuables left in your vehicle and keep valuables, electronics (including cell phones and CDs), gifts and other "theft attractors" stored out of sight.

Protect your purse or wallet at all times. Never carry large amounts of cash or extra credit cards. Carry only those cards or cash that you will need to use that day. If possible, **get out of the habit of even carrying a purse** and carry only what you absolutely need to shop- identification, credit cards, checkbook, cash..most of these items will fit nicely in a pocket.

Never leave your purse, wallet or cell phone unattended in a public place.

Don't overburden yourself with packages while shopping.

Shop with a friend if possible- remember, there is safety in numbers.

Talk to your children about what should happen and what they should do in the event you are separated from them.

Have your keys out and ready as you approach your vehicle.

Do not leave your car unattended with the motor running or with the keys in the ignition; not even for the very short time needed to do a quick errand or pay for fuel.

Only make online purchases from trusted, secure websites.

## **At Home:**

Make sure all doors and windows have locks (window pins, deadbolts, dowels, etc.) and make sure you use them!

Ensure that dark areas and entrances have outdoor lights that are turned on after dark or that are activated by sensors.

Place gifts where they can't be seen from the outside.

**Never open your door to strangers.** Legitimate delivery people will be able to show identification.

Investigate charities before donating.

If traveling, use timers for lights while you're away. Ask a trusted friend or neighbor to watch your home. Remember to make arrangements for mail and newspapers.

Be careful leaving boxes from new electronics and other valuables out on the curb for garbage pickup..this might be free advertising to a thief that you have just gotten a bunch of neat stuff. Break those boxes down and dispose of them inside the trash container.

## **When Driving:**

Recognize that the holidays can cause stress and always keep your emotions under control while driving. Give other drivers plenty of space and always leave yourself an out to avoid a crash.

If you attend parties where alcohol is served, remember to use a designated driver.

Minimize distractions such as talking (or texting) on a cell phone.

**Buckle up all the time, every time!!** That means passengers and kids, too!!

Be patient! Give yourself extra time for travel, especially during periods of inclement weather.

Even in dry conditions, traffic during the holidays is heavier than normal, and it will take longer than you expect to get around.

### **After the holidays:**

Pay close attention to bills and immediately report any unauthorized charges.

Photograph new items and record their serial numbers.

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