



HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS FROM THE JACKSONVILLE SHERIFF'S OFFICE

PERSONAL SAFETY:

- Don't look vulnerable or distracted: Don't leave the store "loaded up" with packages; don't fumble for your keys while walking; **don't talk on the phone or text while moving through a parking lot**; don't wear earphones. Keep purses, handbags, and backpacks close to your body.
- If shopping after daylight hours, park and walk in lighted areas.
- Shop with a friend or relative if possible; there is safety in numbers.
- REMEMBER where you park!
- **While out and about, present an alert appearance.** Be aware of your surroundings; scan the area from time to time. Avoid concentrating so hard on shopping that you fail to keep track of your surroundings, others near you, or your personal property
 - Wear conservative, comfortable clothing
 - Grip items firmly and avoid leaving them unattended
 - Carry minimal cash and valuables; wear minimal jewelry
- If someone grabs you, scream "FIRE" – this will help get people's attention and assistance more easily than "HELP".
- **Shop with friends or relatives if possible; there IS safety in numbers.**
- As you shop, be alert in crowded places. Among pickpockets' favorites are revolving doors, jammed aisles, elevators, and public transportation stops and vehicles, especially at rush hour. Carry the day's most expensive purchases closest to your body, and don't carry so much you lose the ability to react quickly.
- **Using debit or credit cards is much safer than carrying a lot of cash.** If the vendors you will visit don't take cards, consider obtaining traveler's checks which, unlike cash, can be replaced if lost or stolen. Visit ATMs only at well-lighted and populated locations; visit during daylight hours if possible.



- Using a drive-up ATM is usually safer than walking up or into a facility. Remember to scan around you as you make your withdrawal. Many ATMs now have "fisheye" mirrors mounted above the keyboard to enable you to view the entire surrounding area while conducting business.
- **If anyone is loitering, or you don't like their looks, go to another ATM.** Stand so that those behind you cannot see your PIN as you enter it; your PIN should NEVER be written down on or carried with your ATM card.
- **Be observant.** Avoid dark areas, short-cuts, cul-de-sacs, and suspicious persons. Stay near light and people.
- **Be prepared to flee potential problems.** If apprehensive about any location for any reason, leave. Consider carrying a whistle. Keep a finger on your car lock fob's "alarm" button, when walking.

CHILD & PET SAFETY:

- Don't leave children or pets unattended in a car.
- **If possible, leave your children with a baby-sitter while you are shopping.** For holiday shopping, consider making arrangements with family or friends/neighbors, and take turns baby-sitting. If you take your children with you, keep a close eye on them while shopping.
- **"Take 25":** trusted adults are encouraged to take 25 minutes to talk to children about safety and ways to prevent abduction. For more information, please visit www.take25.org
- Remind your children NOT to share personal information on the internet, **including** information about valuable gifts they received, or trips the family will be taking.
- Teens attending parties should be reminded to say "no" to drugs and alcohol, and to never get in the car with someone who is under the influence.
- Educate children and teens about the dangers of synthetic drugs! See the links below for more information
 - PSA: Big Fat Lie -- <http://tinyurl.com/psabigfatlie>
 - PSA: Mother of Victim – <http://tinyurl.com/psamovic>



HOME SAFETY & RESIDENTIAL BURGLARIES:

- **Don't Be a Victim of *Crimes of Opportunity***
- The holidays mean people are busy! Don't get careless. Garage doors should be kept closed, unless you're working in it, or outside in the driveway or yard near the garage (within eyesight). Thieves drive through neighborhoods LOOKING for open garage doors.
- Do not display gifts under a tree in a front window for passing traffic to see, especially when you are not home.
- Cars, even those parked at your home, should remain locked when not in use.
- Backdoors, side doors, sliding glass doors, any access to your home or property should be locked when not in use.
- Keep your home lit when not occupied.
- If you are going out of town, have the Post Office hold your mail until you return. For more information, please visit: <https://holdmail.usps.com/holdmail/>
- There is POWER IN NUMBERS – Neighborhood Watch programs or online “communities” that alert their members about crimes of opportunity can make your neighborhood “unattractive” to thieves. More information is available on JSO's Website (www.jaxsheriff.org) under “Citizen Involvement” on the right side of the homepage. Neighborhoods where residents practice safety tips and are engaged with the police increase the odds of NOT having crimes of opportunity strike them.
- Remember – no one needs to know what you have! Get valuables out of the car and out of plain sight.
- Remind your children NOT to share personal information on the internet, **including** information about valuable gifts they received, or trips the family will be taking.
- And remember, banks DO NOT ask for account verification via the internet. Those can be phishing messages. Do not open them and if you do, don't respond or download anything.
- When receiving electronics or other valuable items make sure you break down the boxes and put them in a dark refuse bag before placing outside for trash pick up. DON'T ADVERTISE your possessions.
- Etch your Driver's License number on all electronic devices. Record you serial numbers and place this list with your insurance documents. A floor safe or larger, heavy, fire-proof safe is recommended. *Small* fire boxes or safes can be easily carried from your home.



ROBBERIES & AUTO BURGLARIES:

- When parking: roll-up the windows, lock the vehicle, and take your keys with you. Don't leave garage door openers or house keys in your car.
- If you must keep anything in your car that identifies where you live, such as insurance cards or registration, make sure to lock the glove box or compartment where you store them, *in addition to locking your car doors*. Thieves want to get in and get out quickly, so using secure compartments in the car for personal items might "harden the target".
- It is recommended that electronics purchases (or jewelry and other expensive items) be made last, if you are out shopping at multiple stores, so you do not have to store them in the car during other stops.
- If you must leave valuable items in your car, place the items out of sight *before reaching your destination, or move them inconspicuously*.
 - Load your trunk when you **leave** a location – never open a trunk, fill it full of valuables, close it, and then walk away to do more shopping or other errands.
 - This includes packages, backpacks, gym bags, GPS units, MP3 players, CDs.
 - An opportunistic thief is on the lookout for "trunk-packing", and can break into your car the minute you're out of sight.
 - Also, someone may be watching when you put items under/behind seat and try to cover them up.
- Thieves check unlocked glove compartments, behind seats, and under seats. It only takes a few seconds to check all the "usual" hiding places in the car where people leave things.
- NEVER think "I'll just be a minute" and leave a car unlocked or worse, leave the engine running. It takes just a few seconds to break into or steal a car.

TRAFFIC SAFETY:



- Traffic hazards always exist, but especially during the holiday season when people are in a hurry and travelling on unfamiliar roads.
- Please be alert and free of distractions while driving, and always follow the rules of the road. For information on traffic safety tips, please visit the Alert Today, Alive Tomorrow webpage at www.tinyurl.com/jsoatat

HOLIDAY PARTY SAFETY:

- Use safe party guidelines when hosting an adult party. If alcohol is served, collect keys from individuals who are drinking or make sure there is a designated driver to take them home. Make sure no one under the age of 21 is allowed to drink.
- Adults hosting parties should remind guests that the party is invitation-only, and illegal substances are NOT welcome!
- Adults attending parties should never accept a drink from someone they don't know, and should never leave their drink unattended.
- If attending a party alone, make sure to tell someone where you are going and when you will be back. (including adults)
- Remain vigilant and stay with a friend at all times
- Don't offer rides to strangers! If someone is under the influence, call them a cab instead.
- Teens attending parties should be reminded to say "no" to drugs and alcohol, and to never get in the car with someone who is under the influence.



JACKSONVILLE SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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