

Shopping

- ◆ Dress casually and comfortably.
- ◆ Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- ◆ Do not carry a purse or wallet, if possible.
- ◆ Always carry your Virginia Driver's License or Identification Card along with *necessary* cash, checks and/or a credit card you expect to use.
- ◆ Even though you are rushed and thinking about a thousand things, stay alert of your surroundings.
- ◆ Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.
- ◆ Pay for purchases with a check or credit card when possible.
- ◆ Keep cash in your front pocket.
- ◆ Notify the credit card issuer immediately if your credit card is lost, stolen or misused.
- ◆ Keep a record of all of your credit card numbers in a safe place at home.
- ◆ Be extra careful if you do carry a wallet or purse. They are the prime targets of criminals in shopping areas, airports and other crowded areas.
- ◆ Avoid overloading yourself with packages. It is important to have clear visibility and freedom of motion to avoid mishaps.

At Home



- ◆ Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave the house, even for a few minutes.
- ◆ When leaving home for an extended time, have a neighbor or family member watch your house and pick up your newspapers and mail.
- ◆ Leave a radio or television on so the house looks and sounds occupied.

- ◆ Large displays of holiday gifts should not be visible through the doors and windows of your home.
- ◆ When setting up a Christmas tree or other holiday display, make sure doors and passageways are clear inside your home.
- ◆ Be sure your Christmas tree is mounted on a sturdy base so children, elderly persons or family pets cannot pull it over on themselves.
- ◆ If you use lights on your Christmas tree, ensure the wiring is not damaged or frayed. Frayed or damaged wiring and overloaded circuits can cause a fire.
- ◆ Never place wrapping paper in your

Hosting or Attending a Party

Each December we turn our attention to the problem of drunk driving by observing National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month. Though the holidays bring joy in celebrations with family and friends, they also bring a tragic increase in the incidence of impaired driving. Keep these important tips in mind:

- ◆ Have non-alcoholic beverages available for party guests.
- ◆ Find alternative transportation for intoxicated guests.
- ◆ Arrange for an official designated driver for your party who will not drink at all.
- ◆ Have something to eat before consuming alcoholic beverages.
- ◆ Eat high protein foods that will stay in your stomach longer and slow the absorption of alcohol into your system.
- ◆ Remember, only time will eliminate the alcohol from your body.
- ◆ Know your safe limit, and **NEVER DRINK AND DRIVE.**

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December Crime Prevention & Safety Tips



The holiday season is always a special time of year. It is also a time when busy people become careless and vulnerable to theft and other holiday crime. We can never be too careful, too prepared or too aware.

The following Holiday Safety Tips were compiled to contribute to the safety and security of the citizens of Suffolk during the holiday season.

Please share this information with family, friends and neighbors.

Commonwealth's Attorney C. Phillips "Phil" Ferguson and his Staff wish you a safe, happy and peaceful holiday season.



Driving



- ◆ Avoid driving alone or at night.
- ◆ Keep all car doors locked and windows closed while in or out of your car.
- ◆ If you must shop at night, park in a well-lighted area.
- ◆ Avoid parking next to vans, trucks with camper shells, or cars with tinted windows.
- ◆ Never leave your car unoccupied with the motor running or with children inside.
- ◆ Do not leave packages on the seat of your car. This creates a temptation for thieves. Lock them in the trunk.
- ◆ When approaching and leaving your vehicle be aware of your surroundings.
- ◆ Do not approach your car alone if there are suspicious people in the area.
- ◆ If available, ask mall or store security for an escort before leaving your shopping location.
- ◆ Have your car keys easily accessible so you won't be vulnerable searching for them.

Automated Teller Machine (ATM)

- ◆ If you must use an ATM, choose one that is located inside a mall or well-lighted location. Withdraw only the amount of cash you need.
- ◆ Protect your PIN number by shielding the ATM keypad from anyone who is standing near you.
- ◆ Do not throw your ATM receipt away at the ATM location.

Children



- ◆ If possible, leave small children at home with a trusted babysitter.
- ◆ Teach your child to go to a store clerk, Mall Security Officer or Police Officer and ask for help in case your child is separated from you.
- ◆ Teach children to stay close to you at all times while shopping.
- ◆ Never allow children to make unaccompanied trips to the restroom.
- ◆ Children should never be allowed to go to the car alone and they should never be left alone in the car.
- ◆ Teach children their full name, address and telephone number to give to Police Officers or Mall Security Officers.
- ◆ Teach children to immediately inform you if a stranger is bothering them.

Strangers at Your Door



- ◆ It is not uncommon for criminals to take advantage of the generosity of people during the holiday season by soliciting donations door-to-door for charitable causes, although no charity is involved.
- ◆ Ask for their identification, and find out how the donated funds will be used.
- ◆ If you are not satisfied, do not donate.
- ◆ Donate to a recognized charitable organization.