

## Holiday Safety Tips

The following Holiday Safety Tips were compiled to contribute to the safety and security of people during the holiday season. 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. Please share this information with family, friends and neighbors. We 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. Set your alarm or use an anti-theft device.
- 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.
- Park as close as you can to your destination and take notice of where you parked.
- Never leave your car unoccupied with the motor running or with children inside.
- Do not leave packages or valuables on the seat of your car. This creates a temptation for thieves. If you must leave something in the car, lock it in the trunk or put it out of sight.
- Be sure to locate your keys prior to going to your car.
- Keep a secure hold on your purse, handbag and parcels. Do not put them down or on top of the car in order to open the door.
- 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.
- Ask mall or store security for an escort before leaving your shopping location.

### Automated Teller Machine (ATM)

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

### Shopping

- Shop during daylight hours whenever possible. If you must shop at night, go with a friend or family member.
- Dress casually and comfortably.
- Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- Do not carry a purse or wallet, if possible.
- Always carry your Driver 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 to 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 crowded shopping areas, transportation terminals, bus stops, on buses and other rapid transit.

- Avoid overloading yourself with packages. It is important to have clear visibility and freedom of motion to avoid mishaps.
- Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason. At this time of year, "con-artists" may try various methods of distracting you with the intention of taking your money or belongings.

### Children

- If possible, leave small children at home with a trusted babysitter.
- Teach your child to go to a store clerk 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. Teach children to immediately inform you if a stranger is bothering them.

### 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.
- Indoor and outdoor lights should be on an automatic timer.
- Leave a radio or television on so the house looks and sounds occupied.
- Large displays of holiday gifts should not be visible through the windows and doors 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 can cause a fire.
- Place your Christmas tree in water or wet sand to keep it green.
- Never place wrapping paper in your fireplace.

## Travel Tips

### Preparing to Travel Overseas

Millions of U.S. and Canadian citizens travel abroad each year using their passports. Although the chances are in your favor in having a safe and incident-free trip, crime, violence and unexpected difficulties do befall our citizens in all parts of the world. To ensure a safe and enjoyable trip overseas review the following travel tips.

- Safety begins when you pack. To avoid being a target, dress appropriately. Flashy wardrobe or one that is too casual can mark you as a tourist. Travel light. Carry the minimum amount of valuables necessary for you trip and plan a place or places to conceal them.
- Secure important travel documents, cash and credit cards. They are most secure when locked in a hotel safe, however if you wish to carry them with you, conceal them in several places rather than putting them all in one wallet or pouch. Avoid using fanny packs, handbags and outside pockets. One of the safest places to carry valuables is in a pouch or money belt worn underneath your clothing.
- Keep medicines in their original labeled containers. To avoid problems when passing through customs, bring copies of your prescriptions and generic names for the drugs. If you have any doubt about the legality of carrying a particular drug into a country, consult the embassy or consulate of that country first.
- Make photocopies of your travel documents. Make two photocopies of your passport identification page, airline ticket, driver's license, credit cards, and itinerary. Leave one set behind with a family member or friend; pack the other in a place separate from where you carry your valuables.
- Secure and identify your luggage. Put your name, address and telephone number inside and outside of each piece of luggage, using covered luggage tags. Remember to lock your luggage and keep the keys concealed.
- Learn about the country's regulations before you leave. The State Department offers Consular Information Sheets on every country of the world. They describe exit and entry requirements, health conditions, crime and security situations, currency regulations, political disturbances and areas of instability, special data about driving and road conditions, and drug penalties.
- Observe local laws and customs. You are subject to the laws of the country where you are; therefore, learn as much as you can about the local laws and customs of the place you're visiting. Good resources are your local libraries, travel agents, the embassies, consulates or tourist bureaus.
- Adhere to Travel Warnings
- Consider travel insurance. If your personal property insurance does not cover you for loss or theft abroad, or more importantly, if your health insurance doesn't cover you, consider purchasing a short-term health and emergency assistance policy designed for travelers. Also, make sure the plan you purchase includes medical evacuation in the event of an accident or serious illness.
- Arrange your itinerary beforehand. As much as possible, plan to stay in a larger, more reputable hotel that has more elaborate security. Because take-off and landing are the most dangerous parts of a flight, book a non-stop flight when possible. When there is a choice of airport or airline, ask your travel agent about comparative safety records.
- Consider getting a telephone calling card. If you have one, verify that you can use it from your overseas location. Access numbers to operators are published in many international newspapers. Find out your access number before you leave