



HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

Each year during the holiday season, the Virginia Beach Police Department handles a noticeably higher number of robberies, burglaries and larcenies. The following information is being provided to help you stay safe during the holiday season, and throughout the year. While we may not be able to do anything about a criminal's ability or desire to commit a crime, we can certainly take steps to greatly reduce the opportunity for crime to occur.

While Out and About

- Always be aware of your surroundings – walk with your head up, shoulders back and constantly scan the area around you.
- Avoid walking, jogging or biking after dark, particularly alone, and stay in well-lit, populated areas
- Avoid wearing headphones (you will not hear someone approaching)
- If you are approached by an armed criminal demanding your valuables, comply with his or her request – your property is replaceable; *you* are not.

Shopping Safety

- Park in well-lit areas; lock up your vehicle and take your keys with you; have your keys in your hand when returning to your vehicle
- Never leave your car running and unattended, even for a second
- Keep valuables and packages out of sight (preferably locked in trunk)
- Make periodic trips with packages to your vehicle to avoid being overwhelmed and unable to react if approached or attacked
- If you are alone after dark, request an escort to your vehicle from mall or store security, or ask other citizens if you can walk out with them (there *is* safety in numbers)
- Make sure to keep a *close* eye on children and talk to them about what to do if they get separated from you in the store or mall (how to find a *trusted* adult – police officer, security officer, or store clerk)

Home Security

- If you are leaving town, stop newspaper and mail delivery; alert a trusted neighbor; install a timer on your interior and exterior lights; leave a car parked in the driveway or ask a neighbor to park in your driveway
- Don't leave boxes or packaging at your curbside which advertises any expensive items you just purchased (e.g., large screen TV box) – instead, dispose of it at a recycling drop-off spot
- Trim bushes and landscaping back from windows; make sure exterior lighting is adequate around exterior of house
- Install deadbolt locks on all doors leading outside of residence, along with 3" screws in the strike plate.
- Call the Police Non-emergency number (385-5000) at the time you notice any suspicious persons or activity in the area
- Participate in Neighborhood Watch; if you don't have one in your community, now's the time to start one up.

***Please contact the Virginia Beach Police Department's
Crime Prevention Unit at 385-1006 for further information.***