Home Holiday Safety

The holidays are a joyous time of year. It is also a time when individuals need to be alert to the possibility of crime. The Omaha Police Department encourages individuals to take simple precautions to ensure a happy and safe holiday. Please share these safety tips with your family, friends and neighbors.

Your Home and Vehicle

* The holidays are a good time to update—or create—your home inventory. Take photos or make videos of items, and list descriptions and serial numbers. If your home is burglarized, having a detailed inventory can help identify stolen items and make insurance claims easier to file. Make sure items like TVs, DVD & VCR players, stereo equipment, cameras, sports equipment, jewelry, silver, computers, personal electronic devices, office equipment, and power tools are on the list.

* Remember to break down boxes from gifts before putting them out for the trash or recycling.

* When returning to your home or auto have your keys in your hand ready to open the door. Check the inside of vehicles and lock the doors upon entering.

* If a stranger comes to the door, beware. Criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts. It’s also not uncommon for people to try to take advantage of others’ generosity during the holidays by going door-to-door for charitable donations when there’s no charity involved. Ask for identification, and find out how the funds will be used. If you aren’t satisfied, don’t give. Help a charitable organization you know and like instead.

* Celebrate responsibly. The holiday season is a time of celebration and revelry. Drinking and driving is a danger to everyone on the road. Anyone with a BAC of .08 or higher is in violation of Nebraska law and may go to jail. Remember that the risk isn’t worth it. If you choose to drink alcohol at a party, don’t drive. Take a cab, use public transportation, or a designated driver.

If You’re Out for the Evening

* Turn on lights and a radio or TV so it looks like someone is home.

* Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave, even if it’s just for a few minutes.

* Don’t display gifts where they can be seen from outside.

If You’re Traveling

* Get an automatic timer for your lights.

* Ask a neighbor to watch your home, shovel snow, and park in the driveway from time to time.

* Don’t forget to have mail and newspaper delivery stopped. If it piles up, it’s a sure sign you’re gone.

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