

Melrose Park Police Department Crime Awareness Announcement:

HOLDIAY AWARENESS

The holidays are a special and busy time of the year. Unfortunately, many people forget to be careful about their property and personal safety, leaving them especially vulnerable to theft and other crime. The Melrose Park Police Department provides tips to help keep your holiday safe:

SHOP SAFELY:

- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash; instead pay with credit cards or a check.
- Watch your credit card during transaction to make sure it is used to print only one transaction. Make sure the cashier returns it to you.
- Keep your wallet in your front pants pocket or coat breast pocket.
- Keep purses close to your body, in front of you where it can be seen, and cover the clasp or flap with your hand. Keep the purse closed, snapped or zippered until you need to enter it.
- Never flaunt your money, expensive jewelry or clothing.
- Walk confidently and be alert. Be especially mindful of pickpockets in crowded areas such as stores, bus stops or trains.
- Never overload yourself with packages; being overburdened may make it difficult for you to keep track of your purse or wallet or to respond to a personal threat.
- Park in a well-lit space and always lock your doors and windows.
- Hide shopping bags and gifts in the trunk.
- Never leave children or pets unattended in your vehicle for any length of time while shopping.
- Teach children that if they get separated from you, they should go to a security officer or store clerk and say they are lost.
- Tell them NEVER to leave the store or go to the parking lot to look for you

WATCH OUT FOR CON GAMES AND FRAUDS: .

- Give only to charities that are familiar to you.
- Ask to see official identification when someone asks for a donation on the street or at your home.
- Ask for written documentation on how your donation is going to be used and if it is tax deductible.
- Be suspicious of charities that only accept cash.

- Only make checks out to the organizations, not the individuals.
- Never give your credit card information over the telephone. For telemarketing solicitations, offer to mail your donation.

PROTECT YOUR HOME:

- Never display gifts where they can be seen from a window or doorway.
- Always lock doors, windows and garage doors when you leave the house, even if you will only be away a short time.
- Always ask for official identification when someone comes to your home asking for donations or claiming to be delivering a package. Never let anyone into the house who cannot provide this information.
- Call the Melrose Park Police (708) 344-8409 and place your house on the Vacation Watch if you will be away for the holiday.