



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Police Remind Shoppers and Residents to Stay Focused on Safety

With the busiest shopping week of the holidays upon us, the Howard County Police Department is reminding citizens of a few simple tips for ensuring a crime-free holiday. Be sure to keep your homes, cars, wallets and property safe from opportunistic thieves—and remind your friends and family to do the same.

Don't shop 'til you drop.

- Stay alert and be aware of what is going on around you.
- Park in a well lighted-area, close the windows and lock the car.
- Don't leave packages and boxes visible through car windows. Lock them in the trunk or take them directly home.
- Don't carry large amounts of cash. Pay with checks or credit cards whenever possible.
- Don't get overburdened with packages; always keep one hand free.
- Keep your purse close to your body, not dangling loosely. Put your wallet in your front pants pocket or in an inside coat pocket.
- Teach children to go to a store clerk or security guard if they get separated from you.

Make sure you don't invite crime home for the holidays.

- Arrange for a trusted neighbor to pick up any packages delivered to your house while you're away or at work.
- Always lock all doors and windows of your car and house, even when someone is home.
- Never display gifts where they can be seen through windows or doors.
- Criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts. Ask for identification and call their main office to verify their employment.
- It's 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 how the funds will be used. Donate to a charitable organization you trust and respect instead.
- After the holidays, don't advertise gifts received by the boxes left for the garbage collection. Destroy boxes and place in a dark garbage bag.

The Howard County Police Department wishes you a safe and happy holiday season.

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