

MALIBU/LOST HILLS SHERIFF'S STATION COMMUNITY CRIME PREVENTION TIPS

HOLIDAY SAFETY

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO REDUCE YOUR CHANCES OF BEING A VICTIM

The busiest shopping days of the year are upon us. Malls, other retailers, and grocery stores will be more crowded than usual with busy shoppers. Whether you are about to celebrate a holiday in the coming weeks or not, please keep the following in mind when going out to shop:

1. Remember to lock your vehicles. Whether you are at the shopping mall or parked in your own driveway, lock your vehicle and hide or remove your valuables from your car.
2. Tell a security guard or store employee if you see an unattended bag or package. The same applies when taking mass transit: report any unattended packages to security or staff.
3. Be sure not to buy more than you can carry. If your packages are blocking your view and/or restricting freedom of motion, ask a store employee to help you carry your packages to your car.
4. Be extra cautious if you carry a wallet or purse. Do not leave your purse unattended in a shopping cart, or turn away from it while shopping.
5. Be aware 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.
6. Remember that the bad-guys may be watching you place your packages in your car and then go to another store. That's when they break into your car to steal what you just stowed away so you could continue to shop.

If you go shopping with children over the next several weeks, keep the following advice in mind for everyone's safety:

1. Ensure that any children with you know your cell phone number. Give cards with contact information to any who don't.
2. Make a plan with children in case you get separated. Have a central meeting place, and review with your children who they can turn to for help if they find themselves alone.
3. Go over the dangers of strangers with them so that they know who not to talk to or follow.

By following this advice, you can reduce the stress of shopping during the particularly busy season. As always, keep your personal safety in mind, be aware of your surroundings, and be on the lookout for fraud and identity theft. Please report any suspicious activity to the Malibu/Lost Hills Sheriff Station at 818 878-1808 or in the case of an emergency dial 911.

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