

Crime Prevention News

December 2008

Holiday Safety Reminders



Winter holidays are a time for celebration. Homes and malls spill over with gift displays. Distracted shoppers rush around, often stressed out and careless, carrying too many packages. Homes are often left empty as part of the great homeward-bound holiday migration. This holiday season, don't let the holiday spirit move you to leaving your home and your wallet open to opportunistic thieves. Follow these simple tips for ensuring a crime-free holiday.

Don't shop 'til you drop:

- Stay alert and be aware of what is going on around you.
- Park your car in a well-lighted area, close the windows, and lock the door.
- 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.

When shopping online, use common sense to protect against fraud or ID theft:

- Familiarize yourself with the rules and policies of online stores and auction sites.
- Only shop with companies you know, and make sure that the sites comply with industry security standards.
- Keep your personal information private, and keep your password secure. Do not respond to requests for your password or credit card information unless you initiate the transaction.

Don't make your office a target for crooks looking for extra holiday cash:

- Lock gifts purchased during lunch in a safe place.
- Always keep your keys and wallet with you. Secure purses, wallets, or other valuables in a locked drawer or cabinet.
- Don't be embarrassed to challenge unfamiliar faces in the office.
- Call Public Safety right-away 212-854-5555 (MS Campus) 212-305-7979 (Medical Center) to report suspicious activity or persons.
- Secure your office when stepping out, even for a minute.
- Don't announce that you are leaving town during the holidays. Don't offer information about co-workers' plans to callers.
- Keep petty cash in a secured area.

Columbia University Public Safety Wishes You & Your Family a Happy & Safe Holiday Season!



GadgetTrak: Anti-Theft Solutions For Mobile Devices added to Public Safety's Crime Prevention Program

With the increase in reported electronic device snatching (Cell Phones, MP3 Players, etc.) in NYC, CU Public Safety has added a recovery program that will assist the Police in the recovery of stolen electronic devices. Being offered for the first time in a University, GadgetTrak USB is GadgetTrak's patent-pending theft recovery system for removable media devices. GadgetTrak USB software is **installed on the storage or mobile device prior to being stolen**. Supported devices include flash drives, cell phones, Black Berry & Windows mobile, digital cameras, SD memory cards, Amazon Kindle, iPods, other MP3 players and other devices. For more information please visit:

[Gadget Trak](#) or call CU Crime Prevention at 212-854-8513.