

# *Holiday Crime Prevention Tips from the Spring Valley Village Police Department*

## **Package Delivery**

Many of us are receiving or sending packages this time of year.

- Ask neighbors who are home during the day to keep an eye out for deliveries.
- Learn what security services are available from your chosen courier.
- Consider insuring items to be shipped.
- Report suspicious persons in the neighborhood.
- Consider having packages sent to your place of employment, if allowed.
- Contact package recipients and tell them when to expect delivery.
- Consider sending packages so that a recipient signature is required.

## **At Home**

- Keep the outside of your home well lit with doors locked and window curtains closed.
- Consider putting lights on a timer when away.
- Don't display gifts beneath the Christmas tree that can be seen from windows or doors.
- After the holidays, don't advertise gifts received by leaving the boxes out for garbage collection. Destroy boxes and place them in a sealed non-clear garbage bag.
- Consider installing an alarm or, if your home already is so equipped, use it.
- Hire a house sitter if you will be away for an extended period of time or have a neighbor(s) keep an eye on your home.
- Make sure to lock gates that enter into your backyard.
- If you are traveling during the Holidays, stop your newspaper delivery and have the postal service hold your mail or have a neighbor collect these for you regularly.
- Contact the police department and have your house placed on the vacation watch list.

## **While Shopping**

- Shop early and leave early to avoid evening darkness.
- Park in a high visibility area and check for lighting in case you leave during hours of darkness.
- Do not park next to vehicles that you cannot see into.
- Prior to arriving at the shopping center, lock all your valuables in the trunk of your vehicle.
- Ask security to escort you to your vehicle if you feel uncomfortable.

- **Walk briskly, confidently, and directly through the parking lot. Be cautious of people handing out fliers or asking questions in the parking area.**
- **Watch for people who may be following you. This can occur inside as well as outside. If you suspect someone is following you, report it to security immediately. Stay alert to your surroundings and the people around you.**
- **Shop with a friend. There is safety in numbers.**
- **Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.**
- **If you must carry a purse, do not wrap the straps around your arms or shoulders. Carry a clutch purse tightly under your arm.**
- **Carry your wallet in a front pocket of your pants.**
- **Crooks look for “high dollar” shopping bags. When possible, slip bags/purchases into a plain non-descript bag.**
- **Watch purchases while eating in mall food courts. Bags can easily be switched or taken.**
- **Talk to your children about what to do if they are lost and explain “Stranger Danger”.**
- **Don’t overburden yourself with too many packages. Use the store’s package pick-up.**
- **Have your car keys ready in hand before leaving the store.**

#### **For Your Vehicle**

- **Park your vehicle in an area that is visible to the public and well lit.**
- **Secure all doors and windows.**
- **Remove all valuables or secure them out of sight.**
- **If your vehicle has a car alarm, use it.**
- **When leaving for the holidays or vacation, do not pack your car the night before. It only makes a more attractive target for a thief.**