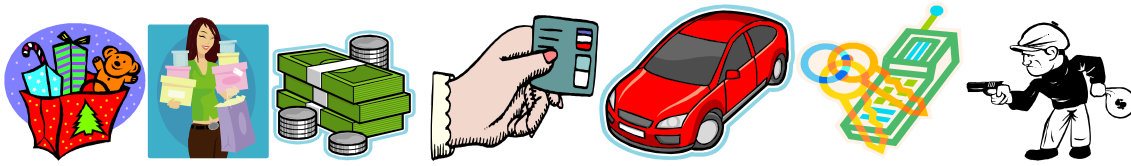


Arlington Heights Police Department

HOLIDAY SHOPPING SAFETY



Have you finished your holiday shopping? If you are like most people the answer is a resounding NO! We tend to wait for the day after Thanksgiving to go out and fight the crowds for sale item scraps. This is the perfect environment for criminals. We are in a hurry, distracted, stressed, carrying extra cash, holding several items and often parked in a remote parking area. The fact that you still have shopping to do makes the following holiday safety list very important and timely:

- Before you leave to go shopping tell a family member or friend where you will be and when to expect you home.
- Park in a well-lit high traffic area of the parking lot. Avoid secluded and dark areas.
- Don't leave valuables in plain view. Lock them in your trunk or cover them.
- Roll up your windows, lock the vehicle and take your keys.
- Shop with an adult friend. Criminals tend to look for someone who is alone.
- Avoid carrying or displaying large amounts of cash.
- Carry any cash or credit cards in an interior or front pocket. Purses are a prime target.
- Do not be distracted by strangers who ask you a seemingly innocent question.
- Make sure you protect your credit/debit card account numbers. Don't leave them on the check-out counter for longer than is necessary.
- Make sure the card you give the cashier is the same one they return to you.
- Take all receipts home and shred if necessary.
- Do not leave your purse or wallet in the shopping cart. Take them with you if you leave the cart for any reason.
- Never leave your purse unattended in any changing room.
- When you return to your car have your keys in your hand and your head up. Avoid distractions and pay attention to your surroundings until you are safely inside your vehicle.
- Look underneath and inside your vehicle before quickly getting in. Lock your door immediately.
- When loading your packages place your purse or wallet in the vehicle first so that it's not in the cart when you turn your back.
- Never hesitate to ask for store security to escort you to your vehicle should you feel apprehensive about anything.

Follow these holiday safety tips to help make your holiday shopping a safe and enjoyable experience!

