

The holidays are a special and joyous time of year. It is also a time when individuals need to be alert to the possibility of crime. The Boston Police Department encourages individuals to take simple precautions to ensure a happy and safe holiday

The hustle and bustle of the holiday season can easily create a distraction for people. However during this festive time, it is important to pay special attention to the things going on around you. The holiday season is considered peak season for burglars, pickpockets and shoplifters.

Don't let the spirit of giving lull you into giving burglars and pickpockets a chance to dampen your holiday spirit. Thieves love the holidays as much as everyone else, especially because it's an opportune time for crime.

The Boston Police Department believes you can never be too careful, too prepared or too aware. Please share these safety tips with your family, friends and neighbors. We ask you to remember these simple safety precautions and enjoy the excitement of a safe and happy holiday.

Here are some tips on how to celebrate safely this holiday season:

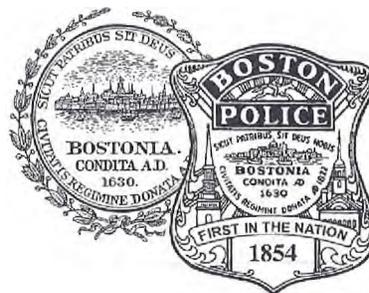
- If You Are Traveling
- If You Are Out for the Evening
- If You Are Hosting a Party
- If You Are Attending a Party
- Protecting Your Vehicle
- If You Are Shopping
- Take a Holiday Inventory
- Celebrate Responsibly

Take a Holiday Inventory

- The holidays are a good time to update — or create— your home inventory. Take photos or make videos of items, and list descriptions and serial numbers. If your home is burglarized, having a detailed inventory can help identify stolen items and make insurance claims easier to file.
- Make sure things like TVs, DVDs, VCRs, stereo equipment, cameras, camcorders, sports equipment, jewelry, silver, computers, home office equipment, and power tools are on the list. Remember to check it twice!

Celebrate Responsibly

- The holiday season is a time of celebration and revelry. Drinking and driving is a danger to everyone on the road. Anyone with a BAC of .08 or higher is in violation of Boston law and may go to jail. Remember that the risk isn't worth it - if you choose to drink alcohol at a party, don't drive. Take a cab, use public transportation, or a designated driver. Have fun, but remember to celebrate responsibly.



SAFETY TIPS



If You Are Traveling

- Get an automatic timer for your lights.
- Ask a neighbor to watch your home, shovel snow, and park in the driveway from time to time.
- Don't forget to have mail and newspaper delivery stopped. If it piles up, it's a sure sign you're away.

If You Are Out for the Evening

- Turn on lights and a radio or TV so it looks like someone's home.
- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave, even if it's just for a few minutes.
- Don't display gifts where they can be seen from outside.

If You Are Hosting A Party

- Have non-alcoholic beverages available for party guests.
- Find alternative transportation for intoxicated guests.
- Arrange for an official designated driver for your party who will not drink at all.

If You Are Attending A Party

- Have something to eat before consuming alcoholic beverages.
- Eat high protein foods that will stay in your stomach longer and slow the absorption of alcohol into your system.
- Remember: Only time will eliminate the alcohol from your body. Know your safe limit.
- Never drink and drive.

Protect Your Vehicle

- Loading up on all those gifts is a sign of progress in the holiday shopping. But if those packages are left out in the open after they're in the car, your car has become a likely target for thieves. Remember the old cliché "Out of sight, out of mind?" The same idea applies to items in your car.
- Always lock your vehicle and store all items out of sight. Breaking into an empty car isn't worth a thief's time. However, anything left in plain view from your holiday gifts to spare change, sunglasses, CDs, iPods, cell phones, GPS or laptops — may tempt a thief.
- Help prevent your vehicle from being stolen by always locking your car and using anti-theft devices. And although it's cold, never leave your vehicle running while you run inside your home or a store — even if only for a minute or two.
- If you take packages to the car but plan to return to the store or mall, drive your car to a new location. Criminals can be on the lookout for unsuspecting shoppers who simply drop their purchases into the trunk and then return to keep shopping.
- When returning to your auto (or home) have your keys in your hand ready to open the door. A few seconds may keep you from becoming a crime victim. Also check the inside of the vehicle for an intruder. Lock your doors immediately after entering the vehicle.

If You Are Shopping

- Walk confidently with your head up, stay alert and be aware of what's going on around you.
- Park in a well-lit space, and be sure to lock the car, close the windows, and hide shopping bags and gifts in the trunk.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash; pay with a check or credit card whenever possible. When using credit cards, make sure that only one credit slip is printed with your charge card. Also, be sure to tear up any carbons that may be used to complete the transaction.
- Deter pickpockets and purse-snatchers. Don't overburden yourself with packages. Be extra careful with purses and wallets. Carry a purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps. Put a wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket. Open-weaved bags or purses without zippers or flaps are easy marks for pickpockets. Check your surroundings when opening your purse or wallet.
- Shopping with kids? Teach them to go to a store clerk or security guard if you get separated.
- Pay attention to people walking in front of and behind you. Be particularly observant when you are in crowded areas such as malls and stores, as places with large crowds are favorites for thieves and pickpockets.
- Dress down while shopping instead of wearing expensive clothing and jewelry, which attracts thieves.