

11 December 2009 (via email)

TPD would like to share the following safety tips to help ensure that you remain safe during this special time of year.

DRIVING

- Avoid driving alone or at night.
- Keep all car doors locked and windows closed while in or out of your car. Set your alarm or use an anti-theft device.
- If you must shop at night, park in a well-lighted area.
- Avoid parking next to vans, trucks with camper shells, or cars with tinted windows.
- Park as close as you can to your destination and take notice of where you parked.
- Never leave your car unoccupied with the motor running or with children inside.
- Do not leave packages or valuables on the seat of your car. This creates a temptation for thieves. If you must leave something in the car, lock it in the trunk or put it out of sight.
- Be sure to locate your keys prior to going to your car.
- Keep a secure hold on your purse, handbag and parcels. Do not put them down or on top of the car in order to open the door.
- When approaching or leaving your vehicle, be aware of your surroundings.
- Do not approach your car alone if there are suspicious people in the area.
- Ask mall or store security for an escort before leaving your shopping location.

Automated Teller Machine (ATM)

- If you must use an ATM, choose one that is located inside of a mall or well-lighted location. Withdraw only the amount of cash you need.
- Protect your PIN by shielding the ATM keypad from anyone who is standing near you.
- Do not throw your ATM receipt away at the ATM location.

Shopping

- Shop during daylight hours whenever possible. If you must shop at night, go with a friend or family member.
- Dress casually and comfortably.
- Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- Do not carry a purse or wallet, if possible.
- Always carry your Arizona Driver License or Identification Card along with necessary cash, checks and/or a credit card you expect to use.
- Even though you are rushed and thinking about a thousand things, stay alert to your surroundings.

- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.
- Pay for purchases with a check or credit card when possible.
- Keep cash in your front pocket.
- Notify the credit card issuer immediately if your credit card is lost, stolen or misused.
- Keep a record of all of your credit card numbers in a safe place at home.
- Be extra careful if you do carry a wallet or purse. They are the prime targets of criminals in crowded shopping areas, transportation terminals, bus stops, on buses and other modes of travel.
- Avoid overloading yourself with packages. It is important to have clear visibility and freedom of motion to avoid mishaps.
- Beware 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.

Children

- If possible, leave small children at home with a trusted babysitter.
- Teach your child to go to a store clerk and ask for help in case your child is separated from you.
- Teach children to stay close to you at all times while shopping.
- Never allow children to make unaccompanied trips to the restroom.
- Children should never be allowed to go to the car alone and they should never be left alone in the car.
- Teach children their full name, address and telephone number to give to police officers or mall security. Teach children to immediately inform you if a stranger is bothering them.

At Home

- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave the house, even for a few minutes.
- When leaving home for an extended time, have a neighbor or family member watch your house and pick up your newspapers and mail.
- Indoor and outdoor lights should be on an automatic timer.
- Leave a radio or television on so the house looks and sounds occupied.
- Large displays of holiday gifts should not be visible through the windows and doors of your home.
- When setting up a Christmas tree or other holiday display, make sure doors and passageways are clear inside your home.
- Be sure your Christmas tree is mounted on a sturdy base so children, elderly persons or family pets cannot pull it over on themselves.

- If you use lights on your Christmas tree ensure the wiring is not damaged or frayed. Frayed or damaged wiring can cause a fire.
- Place your Christmas tree in water or wet sand to keep it green.
- Never place wrapping paper in your fireplace..

Strangers at Your Door

- Be aware that criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts.
- It is not uncommon for criminals to take advantage of the generosity of people during the holiday season by soliciting donations door-to-door for charitable causes although no charity is involved.
- Ask for their identification, and find out how the donated funds will be used. If you are not satisfied, do not donate.
- Donate to a recognized charitable organization.

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.

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.