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HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS DECEMBER 2015

The following Holiday Safety Tips were compiled, in cooperation with the SFSD DPH Training Coordinator, to contribute to the safety and security of people during the holiday season. The holiday season is always a special time of year. It is also a time when busy people become careless and vulnerable to theft and other holiday crime. We can never be too careful, too prepared or too aware. Please share this information with family, friends and neighbors. The San Francisco Sheriff's Department wishes you a safe, happy and peaceful holiday season.

Driving

- Avoid driving alone or at night.
- Keep all car doors locked and windows closed while in or out of your car.
- 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.
- Never leave your car unoccupied with the motor running or with children inside.
- Do not leave packages on the seat of your car. This creates a temptation for thieves.
- When approaching and 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 a law enforcement facility, 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

- Dress casually and comfortably.
- Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- Do not carry a purse or wallet, if possible.

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SHERIFF DPH COMMUNITY AWARENESS BULLETIN

- Always carry your California 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 of 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 rapid transit.
- Avoid overloading yourself with packages. It is important to have clear visibility and freedom of motion to avoid mishaps.

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 peace 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.

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Workplace Security:

- Thieves work offices in buildings looking for checks, wallets, purses, and other unattended valuables. Secure valuables every time you step away from your desk.
- Secure all DPH property such as laptop computers and cellphones. Before leaving for the day, ensure your office is locked.
- If a person is not wearing an ID badge, looks suspicious or that doesn't look like they belong, ask them if they need help, and direct them accordingly. If the person becomes hostile in any way with your inquiry, or the answer given creates suspicion, contact the SFSD immediately at 206-8063 (Non-emergency) or 206-4911 (Emergencies) .

Operation Identification

Operation Identification is a program to deter property-related crime and to assist the San Francisco Sheriff's Department in their efforts to find and return stolen or lost property to its rightful owner. Remember the following:

- Mark gifts with your California Driver License or Identification Card number.
- Do not use your Social Security Number.
- For items that cannot be marked with an engraver, photograph or videotape the items.

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.

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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.

Please see the attached SFSD Fraud Prevention Tips Handout for addition measures on how you can protect yourself this holiday season.

Captain K. Ferrigno #898
San Francisco Sheriff's Department Patrol Unit Commander