



## Stay safe when holiday shopping



The holidays are often a time for celebrations, get-togethers, and lots of shopping for gifts. Unfortunately, theft can happen any time of year, including during the holiday season. To keep yourself and loved ones safe when holiday shopping, consider these tips from the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC):

### **At malls and stores:**

- To keep your money safe, carry your purse close to your body. Wallets are better kept in a front pocket, where they are harder to pickpocket.
- Have your keys ready when walking to your vehicle. Glance at the back seat and be aware of your surroundings before getting in.
- Don't leave packages or valuables in your car where they can be seen. Take them home immediately, if possible, or keep them in the trunk.
- When shopping with children, teach them to go to a meeting place in case you get separated. Talk to them about finding store security guards or employees to help, if needed.

### **When online shopping:**

- Be sure you update anti-virus and anti-spyware software on your computer. Visit [www.bytecrime.org](http://www.bytecrime.org).
- Never give out your password or credit card information in response to emails. Valid companies will never ask for this type of information.
- Make sure the website is secure: look for a locked padlock at the bottom of the screen or "https" in the address at the top.
- Use secure payment methods, such as PayPal or Apple Pay, whenever possible. If using a credit card, check your transactions regularly and alert your bank if you notice anything suspicious.
- Check reviews of online stores to ensure the company is credible.

### **Warm-up thefts are in season**

During the winter months, many people start their cars and let them warm up while they wait inside. This can be a prime opportunity for someone to steal your vehicle or items inside it, according to the NCPC. Here's how to avoid these situations:

- Never leave your car running or keys in the ignition if you're not in it, even for a minute.
- Always keep your car locked, and use anti-theft or alarm devices if you have them.
- Keep valuables out of sight (and preferably out of your car), such as phones, purses and electronics.

