



## Neighborhood Watch Groups of Syracuse



### **Safety Tip:**

The holidays are a time of year when larcenies and burglaries increase. This is mainly due to the fact that people are rushing from one place to another, leaving gifts and other holiday items in plain sight and easily accessible. Below are a few “Holiday Safety Tips” that can help ensure your holidays are safe.

### **Safety Tips for Home:**

- Lock all doors and windows before leaving your home even if it is only for a few minutes.
- DO NOT display presents where they can be seen from windows or doorways. It’s easy for thieves to smash windows and grab the wrapped packages or plan a break-in later.
- Store gifts in a secure location, not in enclosed back or front porches.
- Give your home that “Occupied Look.” Leave lights or a radio on while you’re away. Automatic digital timers are a great way to turn lights on and off when you’re not home.
- Be cautious when throwing out cardboard boxes after the holidays. Boxes displaying the types of gifts you received such as stereos, televisions, etc. are like billboards to thieves. Cut boxes into small pieces and tape them together with the labels facing in. If possible, wait until the morning of your pick-up before putting them to the curb.
- Keep a record of serial numbers for existing property and add new items you receive as gifts.

### **Safety Tips For Shopping:**

- Go shopping before dark and never park in dark lots, no matter how convenient.
- If you’re going shopping, go with friends or neighbors.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.
- Keep purses under your arm and wallets inside jacket pockets.
- Place packages in the trunk where they can’t be seen.
- Car windows should be closed and doors locked.
- Beware of strangers. At this time of the year thieves try various methods or schemes to distract you with the intention of taking your money or belongings. Stay alert.
- Be cautious of strangers asking for charitable donations during the holidays.
- Online shopping is very popular around the holidays. Remember, if you’re not home when your packages arrive they most likely will be left at the front door in plain view of anyone walking or driving down the street to see. Ask a neighbor to collect your items.

### **Safety Tips While Away:**

- Ask neighbors to pick up your mail or newspaper. If possible, have a neighbor park in your driveway.
- If you will be away for an extended period of time make arrangements to have your sidewalk shoveled. Snow covered sidewalks and stairs may be a clue to thieves that you’re not home.
- Signs like exterior lighting burning 24 hours a day, piled up newspapers and mail may indicate to thieves you’re not home.

### **Safety Tips for Traveling:**

- If you are planning on traveling for the holidays never put gifts or valuable items in your vehicle the night before you leave.
- In the event of an emergency, have a contact person you can call to check on your home.
- Your answering machine’s message should be generic. Don’t be descriptive. Your message should never say “We are not home right now.” Never leave details of your travel plans as your message.
- Be cautious about what you post on “Social Media.” Posting your travel plans or updating your status while away may give thieves the information they need to target your home.

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*“Crime Prevention Through Education”*