



Crime Prevention Tips

Consumer Safety Tips

Creating a safe and enjoyable experience



Crime Prevention is Everyone's Responsibility

Whether you are in a busy public place or at your local shopping centre it is important to remember some basic guidelines for making your outing enjoyable. The following tips can enhance your experience

Don't overload yourself with packages

– be mindful of how much you can carry safely. If you need to store packages in your vehicle ensure that they are stored out of sight in the trunk of your car. If you need assistance, ask.

Stay alert – crimes of opportunity often happen in large crowds. By knowing your environment you are less likely to become a victim. Understanding your environment is the best prevention.

Travel with a companion – Shopping with a friend has many advantages and increases your safety “quotient”... except when it is your turn to buy lunch.

Reduce the risk – don't be an easy target. Carry your purse around your shoulder and clutch it with your hand. Don't leave your purse open or unzipped, especially in high traffic areas.

Secure your valuables – don't leave your purse or wallet unattended! Often people will turn their backs to their shopping cart, stroller or motorized scooter. The risk of theft increases when you are distracted and your back is turned.

Automobile Safety

- **Park close to an entrance** – where feasible, park close to an entrance to reduce your exposure while carrying packages.
- **Look about you** – Before getting into your car, scan the area around the vehicle and the back seat.
- **Storing packages** – Don't leave items on seats that are visible from the outside.
- **Trunk lock** – after storing purchases in the trunk disengage the latch that enables the trunk to be opened by a release button on the dashboard (where equipped).
- **Anti-theft device** – even if your car is equipped with an immobilizer, adding a steering wheel lock is a visible deterrent.
- **Vandalism** – thieves will break into cars looking for loose (parking) change – don't leave anything of value that could attract a thief.
- **Vehicle Registration** – keep the original documents at home in a safe place. Keep a photocopy (with your address blacked out) and store it in a secret place such as a wheel well or under a carpet but not in the glove box or console. Failure to black out your address could help a thief go to your house and break in on the assumption that it is unoccupied whilst you are shopping.

This tip sheet is generously supported by:

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Before you leave your home

- **Inventory your wallet** – remove and safely store away any cards or identification you will not need.
- **Be proactive about identity theft** – do what you can to reduce the risk of victimization from theft and potential fraud
- **Be organized** – have a plan of which stores you plan to visit and which payment method you are going to use

Starting your shopping

- **Be patient** – especially in the lead up to Christmas everybody will have the same idea as you and lineups may be longer than normal.
- **Paying for your purchases** – if you are using a debit card Protect your PIN! It is your electronic signature. Watch for anyone shoulder-surfing and trying to memorize your PIN.
- **Check your cards** – make sure you get YOUR card back after the payment transaction is complete.
- **Return policy** – understand the store's return policy before you leave.
- **Unattended purse** – don't place your wallet or purse on a counter or anywhere that it could be stolen.

When you get back to your vehicle

- Check to make sure you have all your belongings BEFORE you leave the area.
- **Receipts** - do you have all your receipts? You will need these should you need to return any of your purchases later.

IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE

- Don't forget to bring your cellphone.
- Look for signs showing the location of Information or Public Assistance.
- Ask a store clerk. Most store employees are familiar with the local environment.

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