

## *Holiday Safety*

The Town of Poughkeepsie Police Department reminds the community to be safe this holiday season. The holiday season is a time when lives become hectic, we become complacent and as a result are vulnerable to crime. Consider shopping with a friend or family member so you're not alone and you can watch over each other.

The holidays are a good time to update or create a home inventory. Take photos or videos of items, and list descriptions and serial numbers. If your home is burglarized, having a detailed inventory can help identify and claim stolen items. Also, write down any account numbers and phone numbers to contact banks and lenders should you need to cancel any financial accounts if you lose or have your wallet stolen.

Whenever you leave your home, make sure your doors and windows are secure, alarm systems are on and packages out of view to deter a potential burglar. If you're traveling out of town, keep your lights on timers, have your driveway cleared of snow and have neighbors keep an eye on your home and retrieve your mail. Criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts or illegitimate people or organizations going door to door for charitable donations. Ask for identification and their Peddler's Permit issued by the Town Clerk. If you're not comfortable or satisfied with their credentials, don't donate or purchase from them.

Holiday shoppers make perfect targets for vehicle break-ins. Caution is advised when choosing to leave valuables or shopping bags in your vehicle. All electronic devices such as GPS systems, radar detectors and other musical devices are tempting for criminals looking to break-in to your vehicle. Plan ahead and leave them at home and if you absolutely must leave any valuables in your car, place them in the trunk and always lock the doors. Anything of value, even loose change, is inviting to a criminal. When possible, shop during daylight hours and park in well-lit, highly trafficked areas of a parking lot.

While shopping, stay alert to your surroundings, don't leave your purse unattended if you must bring it with you. Consider carrying a small wallet and keeping it in your front pocket and avoid carrying a large amount of cash. It is not recommended to have your debit or credit card PIN numbers written down in your wallet. If you realize your card has been lost or stolen, immediately cancel your card and contact the police. Don't overload yourself with packages and beware of strangers approaching you or around you, this may be a method of distracting you with the intention of taking your belongings.

When you're arriving or leaving the mall or store, be aware of who is congregated around the entrances and parking lots. Use caution when approaching your car, take time to look inside, around and even underneath your vehicle. This is not the time to let your guard down. Keep your guard up until you are locked inside your vehicle and on your way.