



## 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 doorways and passageways are clear inside your home.
- Be sure your Christmas tree is mounted on a sturdy base so children, elderly person or family pets cannot pull it over themselves.
- If you use lights on your 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.

You may contact the Gulfport Police Department by calling 228-868-5703.

You may also obtain additional information about other crime prevention topics on the Gulfport Police Department website:

***[www.gulfportpolice.net](http://www.gulfportpolice.net)***

**Dispatch – 228-868-5959**  
**Emergency – 911**

# Holiday Safety Tips

[www.gulfportpolice.net](http://www.gulfportpolice.net)



**T**he holiday season is a special time of year. It is also a time when busy people become careless and vulnerable to theft and other holiday crime. The Gulfport Police Department wants everyone to have a secure and happy holiday season by taking a minute from the rush to read and apply the following Holiday crime prevention measures.

## Attending a Party

- **Never drink and drive.**
- Know your safe limit.
- Remember only time will eliminate the alcohol from your body.

## Driving

- Be cautious when driving alone 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-lit area.
- Do not park next to vans, trucks with camper shells or cars with tinted windows.
- Never leave your car unoccupied with the engine running or with children inside.
- Do not leave packages on the seat of your car. This creates an unnecessary temptation.
- When approaching and leaving your car, be aware of your surroundings. Do not approach your car alone if there are suspicious people standing by it. Ask mall or store security for an escort.

## Shopping

- Stay alert to your surroundings. Minimize shopping after dark or when alone. Take a family member or friend with you.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. Pay for purchases with a check or card when possible.
- If you must use an ATM, choose one located inside a mall, grocery store or other well-lit area.
- Shield the ATM keypad from anyone standing near you. Do not throw your ATM receipt away at the ATM location.
- Keep cash in your pocket.
- Notify the credit card issuer immediately if your card is lost, stolen or misused.
- Keep a record of all your credit card numbers in a safe place at home so you can report stolen cards by their number.
- Be extra careful if you carry a wallet or purse. They are prime targets of criminals in crowded places.
- Avoid overloading yourself with packages. It is important you have clear visibility and freedom of motion to avoid mishaps.

## Dressing

- Dress casually and comfortably.
- Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- Carry your wallet in your front pocket and your purse securely around your shoulder.

## Strangers at Your Door

- 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.
- Solicitors must obtain a permit to solicit door-to-door in the City of Gulfport. If a solicitor does not have a permit, notify the Gulfport Police Department.

## At Your Door cont.

- Ask for identification and find out how the donated funds will be used. If you are not satisfied, do not donate. Donate to recognized charitable organizations.
- Never open your door to solicitors if you are not comfortable with the situation and always feel free to call the police if it does not seem right.

## Shopping with 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 while shopping.
- Teach children to stay close to you at all times. Never allow children to make unaccompanied trips to the restroom.
- Children should never be allowed to go to the parking lot or 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 a police officer or mall security only.
- Teach children to immediately inform you if a stranger is bothering them.

The information contained in this brochure is meant to contribute to the safety and security of people during the holiday season. We can never be too careful, prepared or aware. Share this information with family, friends and neighbors. Schedule family discussions to ensure they understand crime prevention and personal safety measures that will help your family have a safe holiday season.

**The Gulfport Police Department wants everyone to have a safe, happy and peaceful holiday season.**