

PERSONAL SAFETY

The threat of physical assault does not necessarily increase along with the crowds that herald the holiday season. It's when you're far from the crowd, in distant reaches of parking lots or other isolated areas of the mall that you are most vulnerable. To protect yourself:

- Always try to walk to and from your vehicle with another person. If you are shopping alone, consider walking near other shoppers in the parking lot.
- If shopping alone and leaving at night, particularly if you're carrying several bundles, ask a security officer to accompany you to your car.
- Inside a mall, avoid darkened hallways and other backroom areas, especially near closing time.
- Avoid using bathrooms that are tucked away in a back area of a mall concourse or department. Always accompany your child to the bathroom.



Remember...

**Criminals are looking for the
“OPPORTUNITY”**

**Reduce the opportunity by
making small modifications
to your lifestyle and decrease
the chance of becoming a
victim.**



Emergency 9-1-1

**Prince William County
Police Department
703-792-6500**

**Crime Prevention Unit
703-792-7270**

STAY SAFE DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON



Holiday Season is a festive time of joy and anticipation for shoppers. Pickpockets and other criminals also look forward to the holiday shopping season.

With your arms overloaded with packages, distracted by the elaborate holiday decorations, you may inadvertently become a tempting target.

AT HOME

- Don't announce your new high-dollar purchases after the holidays. Break down the boxes of TVs, stereos, computers, etc. and turn them inside out before putting them in the trash.
- If you are traveling for the holidays, make your home look "lived in". Have a friend or neighbor collect your mail and newspapers or have your service suspended while you are away.
- Use timers to turn lights off and on. Put an automatic timer on several lights and the radio.
- Have a neighbor keep your property maintained.
- Leave shades and blinds in their normal positions.



ATM's

Automated teller machines are handy to have around. But while ATMs make it easier for you to get to your money, they provide the same service for thieves.

- Memorize your PIN code. Keep your PIN to yourself -- if others are nearby waiting to use the ATM, don't let them see which buttons you press.
- Choose a bank with an ATM located in a highly visible, well-lighted area.
- If you must withdraw money from an ATM after dark, have someone accompany you. Also, try not to make large cash withdrawals.
- If you see anyone loitering near the machine who looks or acts suspicious, walk away.
- Minimize time spent at the ATM by having your card in your hand and resisting the temptation to count the money after it has been dispensed.
- While using an ATM, look around from time to time and be aware of what's going on around you. If anything suspicious happens, immediately cancel your transaction and leave.

PICK POCKETS & PURSE SNATCHING

Jostling through crowded malls while carrying your jacket or juggling countless bags makes you an attractive target to criminals looking to grab wallets, purses and your purchases. To confuse would-be thieves:

- If you carry a wallet, keep it in the front pocket of your pants, rather than in a back pocket or jacket.
- If you carry a purse, hold your purse close to your body, with the opening facing toward you. If walking with another person, the purse should be held between the two.
- When possible, avoid using revolving doors, particularly the automatic kind. A thief with good timing can grab a purse or package and make a quick getaway in the time it takes you to emerge.
- Consolidate purchases into one or two large shopping bags so you can keep track of everything.
- Never leave your purchases unattended, even for a few minutes.