



Christmas Crime Prevention Advice

Whilst gathering your shopping this year, take some time to consider those who may be looking to steal a better deal this Christmas.

It's an unfortunate fact that for some Christmas provides a number of opportunities for criminals to benefit from the good will of others. Sussex Police would like to offer a few tips to help you remain vigilant and reduce the chances of being affected by Christmas and New Year crime, whether on the High Street, on a night out or at home.

Protect yourself

- Walk confidently and be aware of your surroundings
- Avoid using a personal music player or mobile phones
- If carrying a bag, wear it with the flap facing you and with the strap over your arm and head
- Never leave a club or pub alone and always let people know where you are. Make travel plans beforehand and try to arrange a lift from someone you know.
- Have a taxi number on you and try to use pre-booked taxis rather than hailing one down. Always sit in the back, behind the driver.
- On public transport, sit close to the driver or guard and also near to CCTV. Avoid empty areas and if you feel unsafe contact a member of staff.
- If you have no choice but to walk, never walk along dark shortcuts and always face oncoming traffic.

Protect your car

- Park in a well-lit, busy area and ensure you close your car windows, lock the doors and use a steering lock.

- Never leave valuables in your car. The glove compartment is likely to be the first place thieves will look. The cost of replacing a smashed window can often cost more than the valuables themselves.
- Park somewhere that you will feel safe walking back to, remembering that it gets darker much earlier during winter months.
- Keep purchases out of sight when in the car or at home - if they can be seen they can be stolen.
- Leave your keys in a secure place. Keys can remain visible in a coat pocket or open bag are easily snatched from them.

Protect your home

- Ensure doors and windows are locked at all times and remember to use your alarm if you have one.
- Keys, money and phones are a burglar's dream. Keep all such items well out of sight and reach of doors, windows and letterboxes. Intruders sometimes use rods to reach bags and keys and use them to enter your home with ease. In one third of burglaries, the thief didn't have to force entry into the home.
- If you like to display your Christmas tree in your window remember to keep the presents away from prying eyes. Just like anyone else, thieves like to window shop before obtaining their goods.
- Make your home look occupied by using timer switches on your lights and radios so people think you are in. If you don't have them, ask your neighbours to keep an eye on your home and draw your curtains if you are away.
- Dispose of packaging carefully. Empty boxes awaiting collection and bins full of packaging are a perfect advert for burglars.
- Be wary of anyone offering you high price goods at a cut down price. Your bargain could be someone else's Christmas present and handling stolen goods could carry a prison sentence.