

Holiday Crime Prevention Tips

- Don't leave valuables of any kind, including gifts, in your vehicle unattended. If you must leave something in your vehicle, make sure to put it in a secure, hidden location such as the trunk or glovebox (make sure you lock it!) BEFORE you drive to your destination.
- Doing all your holiday shopping at once? Don't take any bags, boxes, or pre-wrapped gifts to your car until you're done for the day and ready to head home. If you have too many to manage yourself, ask the store clerk if they can hold your bags until you check-out. Many major malls have concierges that also offer this service and will help you take items to your car. If you must take items to your car before you finish shopping, put them in your trunk or some other similarly out-of-sight and secure location, and re-park your vehicle on the other side of the mall.
- While a beautifully decorated Christmas tree may look great in a big picture window, it can also make your home a target for burglars. Most families put their gifts under the tree, and having them right under the window makes a midday smash-and-grab very easy and tempting. Keep your tree and your gifts in a part of the room away from the window, preferably in a location that can't be seen from outside.
- Beware of what you post online! Travel plans, gifts you've purchased or received, and other similar topics can have you unwittingly making yourself a target for burglary. Since over half of Lancaster's burglaries are committed by someone that the resident has allowed into their home at some point, there's a good chance that it will be one of your friends, not a stranger, that's got your brand new plasma TV, especially if they know they'll have some time before you get home.
- After the gifts have been opened, don't just put the empty boxes out on the curb with the trash for pick-up—cut them up into smaller pieces that will easily fit in your trash bin and still allow the lid to close completely. Burglars often use boxes left out with the post-holiday trash to go “shopping” and select which houses to target. If it won't all fit into the trash at once, spread it out over two or even three weeks.
- Carry as little cash as possible during the holiday season, as pickpockets and purse snatchers are more frequent during this time. Credit and debit cards can be cancelled, but once cash is gone, it's gone.
- Check-writer? Use a gel pen instead of a standard ballpoint or rollerball pen. Gel ink is much more difficult and in some cases impossible for a forger to remove or alter on the face of the check.
- Be extra wary of door-to-door solicitors and charity solicitations at storefronts. While many of these are legitimate, there are those who would only seek to get your money, your personal or financial information, or your valuables (by coming back when you're not home).



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