

## Hilliard Division of Police

5171 Northwest Parkway  
Hilliard, OH 43026



**This holiday season don't let the spirit of giving lull you into giving burglars and pickpockets a better chance to do their dirty work. Crooks love the holidays as much as everyone else, but mostly because it's an opportune time for crime. The Hilliard Division of Police would like to share the following safety tips to help you have a happy holiday!**

### SHOPPING IN STORES

- 🌿 Shop with friends or relatives if possible; there is safety in numbers. As you shop, be alert in crowded places. Don't carry so much you lose the ability to react quickly.
- 🌿 If possible, leave your children with a baby-sitter while you are shopping. For holiday shopping, consider making arrangements with family or friends/neighbors, and take turns baby-sitting. If you take your children with you, keep a close eye on them while shopping.
- 🌿 Teach your children to go to a store clerk or security guard if they ever get separated from you in a store/mall, and be sure they know their first and last name so they can tell someone who they are.
- 🌿 Store packages in the trunk or, if your vehicle doesn't have one, out of plain view (on the floorboard, under a blanket or clothes). Ask for an escort to your car if you feel nervous. If possible, take packages directly home.
- 🌿 Return to the mall or store for assistance if you spot suspicious activity near your vehicle. Stay alert while loading items into or out of the vehicle or arranging cargo. If someone approaches, and you feel threatened, get in and lock up until they leave the area; if they loiter, drive away.
- 🌿 Using debit or credit cards is much safer than carrying a lot of cash. Wait until asked before taking out your credit card or checkbook. An enterprising thief would love to shoulder surf to get your account information. Deter pickpockets by carrying your purse close to your body or your wallet inside a pocket.
- 🌿 Visit ATM's only at well-lighted and populated locations; visit during daylight hours if possible. Remember to scan around you as you make your withdrawal. If anyone is loitering, or acting suspicious, go to another ATM. Stand such that those behind you cannot see your PIN as you enter it; your PIN should NEVER be written down on or carried with your ATM card.
- 🌿 Save all receipts. Print and save all confirmations from your online purchases. Start a file folder to keep all receipts together and to help you verify credit card or bank statements as they come in. Tell a security guard or store employee if you see an unattended bag or package.

## SHOPPING ONLINE

- ❧ Before surfing the Internet, secure your personal computers by updating your security software. Everyone's computer should have anti-virus, anti-spyware, and anti-spam software, as well as a good firewall installed.
- ❧ Keep your personal information private and your password secure. Do not respond to requests to "verify" your password or credit card information unless you initiated the contact. Legitimate businesses will not contact you in this manner.
- ❧ Beware of "bargains" from companies with whom you are unfamiliar—if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!
- ❧ Shop with companies you know and trust. Make sure when shopping on-line that you are on a "https://" secured website. Check for background information if you plan to buy from a new or unfamiliar company.

## TRAVELING

- ❧ Ask a neighbor to watch your home, shovel snow, and from time to time park in your driveway.
- ❧ If you are traveling, get an automatic timer for your lights.
- ❧ Don't forget to have your mail and newspapers stopped.
- ❧ The Hilliard Division of Police offers a free house check service while you are away on vacation.
- ❧ When staying in a hotel, secure all packages, gifts, and valuables inside your room.
- ❧ Be observant. Avoid dark areas, short-cuts, and suspicious persons. Stay near light and people. Be prepared to flee potential problems. If apprehensive about any location for any reason, leave. Consider carrying a whistle.

## CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

- ❧ Confine your charitable giving to establishments you know and trust. Criminals may pose as a charitable organization going door-to-door to take advantage of your generosity.



**HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAY!**