

# HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

## Jacksonville Beach Police Department

**When parking...** roll up the windows, lock the vehicle, take the keys, and insure your valuables are **concealed** (*preferably in the trunk*). During hours of darkness, park and walk in **lighted** areas to the extent possible.

Keep your wallet, purse, and any other valuables on your person or otherwise out of sight, NOT on the seat next to you.

If you must leave valuable items in your car while out and about, place items out of sight before reaching your destination or move them inconspicuously. This includes packages, backpacks, gym bags, GPS units, MP3 players, and so forth. Someone may be watching when you put items under/behind a seat or throw something over them. An opportunistic thief is on the lookout for "trunk-packing", and can break into your car the minute you're out of sight.

One reason SUVs and pickups are common auto-burglary targets is because they don't have a "trunk" to hold valuables — the driver/passenger generally just "hides" their valuables "out of sight". The thieves know this, and do check glove compartments, behind seats, and under seats. It only takes a few seconds to check all the "usual" hiding places.

Unobtrusively locking everything valuable "in the trunk" (*if you have one*) may be difficult when you're combining errands at multiple destinations. Certainly avoid leaving packages or shopping bags **visible** in your car — lock them in the trunk out of sight if you have to leave packages in your car unattended.

Plan your shopping/errands so that you don't load your trunk until you are **ready to drive to another destination**. Load your trunk when you **leave** a location — never open a trunk, fill it full of valuables, close it, and then just walk away to do more shopping or other errands.

**When returning to your vehicle**, carry your keys in your hand and be ready to unlock the door and enter as quickly as possible. As you approach your vehicle, scan the area, glance underneath the vehicle, and take a quick look inside before entering.

**While out and about, present an alert appearance.** Be aware of your surroundings; scan the area from time to time. Avoid concentrating so hard on shopping that you fail to keep track of your surroundings, others near you, or your personal property.

**Shop with friends or relatives if possible; there IS safety in numbers.** As you shop, be alert in crowded places. Among pickpockets' favorites are revolving doors, jammed aisles, elevators, and public transportation stops and vehicles, especially at rush hour. Carry the day's most expensive purchases closest to your body, and 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. It's best to keep children under four in a stroller. Children in shopping carts should be properly belted and seated in the child carrier area at all times —never let your child stand in or push a shopping cart.

Visit ATM's only at well-lighted and populated locations; visit during daylight hours if possible. Using the drive-up is usually safer than walking up or into a banking facility. Remember to scan around you as you make your withdrawal. Many ATMs now have "fisheye" mirrors mounted above the keyboard to enable you to view the entire surrounding area while conducting business; try to patronize ATMs so-equipped, and use the mirror!

**If anyone is loitering, or you don't like their looks, 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.

*Be prepared to flee potential problems.* If apprehensive about any location for any reason, leave. Consider carrying a whistle. Weapons are not recommended, and may be unlawful.