



HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS



The New London Police Department would like to extend every resident and visitor to the City our wishes for a wonderful holiday season.

As you may know, this time of year we often see an increase in property crimes, including burglaries, robberies, and larcenies. To help ensure the safety of all, whether at home or “out and about,” we would like to remind all to take certain precautions.

HOME SAFETY TIPS: Many criminals view the holiday season as an opportunity to burglarize homes for cash, credit cards, valuables, and gifts.

You should remain vigilant in securing your home, **locking windows and doors** whenever leaving your home, even if only for a moment. If you display holiday decorations, try to **refrain from showing them or gifts in a front window**, as this is easily visible from the street and may tempt criminals to “smash and grab” or plan a later break-in. Also regarding holiday decorations, be cautious when running electricity to outdoor lights; often times if the power source is within the home, the cord will make it difficult to secure all windows and doors. You should unplug electric decorations when leaving your home; faulty holiday decorations may lead to a fire.

After the holidays, do not pile up empty boxes from electronics or other purchases on the curb for garbage collectors. Break them down or cut them in order to conceal the information of what new, expensive items you now have in your home.

Alert local authorities of people going door to door in your neighborhood. Beware of strangers. Sometimes a criminal can pose as a representative from an organization or charity and solicit donations while trying to view the contents of your home. They may come back at a later time and burglarize you.

Do not open your door to persons whom you do not know, ask them how can you help them through the door. If they ask to use your phone take the number and call for them but do not let them in. Be aware of this and other suspicious activity such as someone asking to use your restroom, these are often used as ploys for criminals to enter homes to spot things of value.

When leaving your home, for short outings or longer trips, be careful to maintain the safety of your home in your absence. If you leave your home, try to **keep lights and a radio or television on so the home appears to be occupied.** Also, burglars know to look for a spare key near the front entrance. Instead, opt to **give a key to a trusted neighbor or family member.** Also, arrange for someone to pick up mail and/or newspapers, which can often advertise absence when they start to pile up. Do not post your family name on the mailbox or exterior of your home. A clever thief could use the

name to obtain your contact information and confirm your absence. To this effect, **do not leave descriptive messages on your voicemail or internet social networking accounts (such as FaceBook or MySpace) letting people know you are away.** This gives criminals confirmation of your absence and the timeframe they have to break in.

PERSONAL SAFETY TIPS: Stay alert to your surroundings!

If shopping, try to **finish up before dark** if possible. Try to plan shopping trips with a friend, and **never park in a poorly lit area.** Remove valuables from the vehicle. If this is not possible, at least **hide valuables from plain sight** or place them in the trunk. Keep car doors locked, windows closed, and alarm systems activated, if you have one.

Avoid carrying large amounts of cash; pay for purchases with check, credit or debit card whenever possible. To discourage anyone “snatching” your packages or handbags, **try not to overburden yourself with bags.** Be careful with purses and wallets: carry your purse under your arm; keep wallets in inside jacket pockets instead of rear pants pockets, which are more susceptible to pickpockets. Always **be wary of strangers approaching you** for any reason. Con artists may try various methods of distraction with the intention of theft.

As you approach your vehicle, try to keep your keys readily available. Be aware of any persons lingering around the car or following you, and scan the interior of the car before getting in to make sure no one is hiding inside.