



## SHAKER HEIGHTS

November 2008

Dear Community Members:

I hope that this message finds you all well. As we near the end of the year, I am happy to report that crime is down, despite the lagging economy which oftentimes has a negative effect on crime rates. I attribute this reduction to two things – the hard work and dedication of the men and women of the police department and those of you in the community who dedicate your time and energy to watching over your neighbors and neighborhoods, making sure that Shaker Heights continues to be a safe place to live and visit.

The holiday season is quickly approaching. Please be reminded that this is an opportune time for crime. Our homes are filled with gifts and we tend to be careless by leaving holiday purchases and other "goodies" – cell phones, briefcases, purses – in plain view in our vehicles, as we rush around, stressed out, looking for last-minute gifts trying to get everything done.

I am asking for your help by reading the crime prevention tips below and taking the necessary steps to help us prevent crime. This holiday season, don't let the spirit of giving lull you into giving those who would commit crimes against you a better chance to do their dirty work.

So please stay safe and have a great holiday season.

Sincerely,  
D. Scott Lee, Chief of Police

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### **Keep these tips in mind this season:**

#### **Protect Your Vehicle**

- Remember the old cliché "Out of sight, out of mind?" The same idea applies to items in your car. Always lock your vehicle and store all items out of sight – put them in your trunk.
- Breaking into an empty car isn't worth a thief's time. However, anything left in plain view — from your holiday gifts to spare change, sunglasses, CDs, cell phones or briefcases — may tempt a thief.



CITY OF SHAKER HEIGHTS | POLICE DEPARTMENT

- Don't park in secluded or dark areas of the parking lot. Be patient and courteous while parking.
- Help prevent your vehicle from being stolen by always locking your car and using anti-theft devices.
- Although it's cold, never leave your vehicle running while you run inside your home or a store — even if for only a minute or two.

## **Protect Your Home**

- Remember: Approximately 50% of all burglars enter the house via unlocked or open doors and/or windows.
- Burglars know that many households have new, and oftentimes expensive, items in their homes following the December holidays— especially items such as new computers, stereo components, televisions, cameras and other electronic equipment. In too many cases, residents make it easy for burglars to figure out which homes to target by putting boxes that identify their new gifts in plain view with their other garbage. Avoid becoming an easy target for post-holiday burglars by not leaving boxes for new electronics out where they can be seen instead, break down any boxes you are throwing out, put them in garbage bags and place them inside a trash can.
- Turn on lights and a radio or TV so it looks like someone's home.
- Make sure all doors & windows have secondary locks (window pins, deadbolts, dowels, etc.) and use them when you leave, even if it's just for a few minutes.
- Ensure that dark areas and entrances have outdoor lights that are turned on after dark or that are activated by sensors.
- Place gifts where they can't be seen from the outside.

## **If a Stranger Comes to the Door**

- Criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts. And it's not uncommon for people to try to take advantage of others' generosity during the holidays by going door-to-door for charitable donations when there's no charity involved. Ask for identification, and find out how the funds will be used. If you aren't satisfied, don't give. Help a charitable organization you know and like instead. Or think about reaching out in the spirit of the season and helping someone who's less fortunate or lonely. Do your part to make the holidays a safe and happy time for everybody— except con artists and other criminals.

## **If You Are Traveling**

- Get an automatic timer for your lights.
- Ask a neighbor to watch your home.
- If you will not be home for deliveries have your items delivered to a neighbor who will be home.
- Don't forget to have mail and newspaper delivery stopped. If it piles up, it's a sure sign you're gone.
- Hold on to your money: Always carry your purse tucked tightly under your arm, ladies. And for you men . . . it can happen to you too! Put your money and only necessary cards in your front pants pocket where it harder for a bad guy to get at it.
- Recognize that the holidays can cause stress – keep emotions under control while driving. Give other drivers plenty of space and always leave yourself a route to avoid an accident.

## **Celebrate Responsibly**

- The holiday season is a time of celebration and revelry. Drinking and driving is a danger to everyone on the road. Anyone with a blood-alcohol content of .08 or higher is in violation of Ohio law and may go to jail. Remember that the risk isn't worth it — if you choose to drink alcohol at a party, don't drive. Take a cab, use public transportation or a designated driver.

## **After the holidays:**

- Pay close attention to bills and report any unauthorized charges.
- Photograph and record the serial numbers of new items and add them to your inventory.

**In addition, of course, if you see someone suspicious call the Police Department's non-emergency number, 216.491.1234, or if you see a crime in progress, call 9-1-1.**