



## **COMMUNITY ALERT NOTIFICATION**

### **LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Official Publication of the West Valley Area Community Relations Office  
Senior Lead Office (818) 374-7630

#### **Don't Let Crime Steal Your Holiday!**

Every year, from the middle of November through the middle of January, we see a rise in Property-Type Crimes in the West Valley Area. This includes suspects breaking into houses and cars. Many of these crimes could have been prevented if the victims just followed a few Crime Prevention Tips. Remember that most of these types of crimes are merely crimes of opportunity. If you can take the opportunity away, you have a much better chance of avoiding becoming the victim of a crime.

#### **Holiday Crime Prevention Tips While Shopping:**

- Stay alert to your surroundings and the people around you.
- Shop with a friend, there is safety in numbers.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.
- Pay for purchases with a check, credit or debit card.
- If possible, carry only your driver's license, personal checks, or necessary credit or debit cards.
- If you must carry a purse, do not wrap the straps around your arms or shoulders. Carry a clutch purse tightly under your arm or wear a fanny pack.
- Do not carry a wallet in a back pocket. It should be placed in a front pocket of your pants for safety.
- Be aware that predators look for the "high dollar" shopping bags with your purchases. When possible, slip bags/purchases in a plain nondescript bag.
- Watch purchases while eating in mall food courts; bags can easily be switched or taken.
- Educate your children about what to do if they are lost and talk to them about "Stranger Danger".
- Don't overburden yourself with too many packages. Use store's package pick-up.
- Have your car keys ready in hand before leaving the store.
- If you do return to your vehicle to unload purchases, place them in the trunk of the vehicle.
- Try not to shop too late in the evening. Remember that fewer people are present at this time.

#### **Holiday Crime Prevention Tips In Parking Lots:**

- Shop early and leave early to avoid evening darkness.
- Park in a high visibility area, and check for lighting in case you leave during hours of darkness.
- Do not park next to a vehicle with dark tinted windows.

- Prior to arriving at the shopping center, lock all your valuables in the trunk of your vehicle.
- Leave the store with others, not alone.
- Ask security to escort you to your vehicle if you feel uncomfortable.
- Walk briskly, confidently, and directly through the parking lot. Be cautious of people handing out fliers or asking questions in the parking area.
- Watch for people who may be following you. This can occur inside as well as outside. If you suspect someone following you, report it to security immediately.

**Holiday Crime Prevention Tips At Home:**

- Keep the outside of your home well lit with doors locked and window curtains closed.
- Don't display gifts beneath the Christmas tree that can be seen from windows or doors.
- After the holidays, don't advertise gifts received by the boxes left for the garbage collection. Destroy boxes and place in a sealed, non-clear garbage bag.

Finally, if you observe any suspicious activity or are the victim of a crime, contact shopping center security officers if available or the LAPD at 911 (emergencies only) or (213) ASK-LAPD (non-emergencies). Be sure to have relevant suspect description and vehicle information as well as information regarding the location of the crime or suspicious activity readily available.