

The Putnam County Sheriff's Office provides the following tips on holiday shopping and home safety while you are out of town for the holidays:

Holiday Shopping Tips

- 1) Do not leave purchased items visible in the car-leave them in the trunk.
- 2) While shopping in the evening hours may be less crowded, there are also additional potential risks involved. Park in areas of parking lots that have adequate lighting. Consider shopping with someone rather than going alone.
- 3) Make sure purses and wallets are secure on your person and you are aware of their location at all times.
- 4) Keep the amount of available cash you have at a minimum or separate it into different pockets or locations on or about your person. This way all of it is not lost if your purse or wallet is misplaced or stolen.
- 5) Credit cards offer convenience and security, however, keep track of all cards and keep receipts to compare to your monthly statement.
- 6) Remain aware of your surroundings at all times and move to and from your vehicle with confidence and "purpose". Have keys ready before getting to your car so you do not have to search for them while standing near it.
- 7) Report suspicious people or activity to law enforcement immediately!
- 8) Most important is to reduce your own vulnerability and do what you can to minimize the possibility that you could be a victim of a crime or accidental loss.

Home Safety Tips While Away

- 1) Valuable items, such as televisions, stereos, and computers should be inscribed with an identifying number unique to its owner (do not use your entire social security number).
- 2) Create an up-to-date home inventory including make, model, serial numbers, other detailed descriptions, and photographs of items of value (including jewelry). This inventory should be kept somewhere safe, out of the house.
- 3) At least two light timers should be set to turn the lights and TV on and off in a logical sequence when away for an extended time period to give the appearance that someone is home.
- 4) The motion detector or other alarm system (if you have one) should be activated when you leave home.
- 5) Mail and newspaper deliveries should be stopped or arrangements for a neighbor/friend to pick them up should be made when you are away from home for a period of time.
- 6) Ask a trusted neighbor to tend the yard, shovel the snow, and watch your home when you are away or have a trusted friend or relative house sit in your absence.
- 7) Make sure all doors and windows are locked when you leave, even if you have an alarm system.
- 8) Contact the Putnam County Sheriff's Office (419-523-3208) to request extra patrols of your residence while you are out of town.