HOME AND TRAVEL

SAFETY TIPS

Before traveling, contact your local law enforcement agency and ask to have your home placed on “vacation watch.” Most municipalities offer this service. A patrol officer will ride by your home for a safety check during their shift. Notify authorities when you have returned. Please do not call 911 to discuss this service. A non-emergency number should be listed in your phone book.

Try to make your house look lived in while you are away. Consider inexpensive timers for lights and radios, and have them come on at times when you are normally home.

Do not broadcast your plans to everyone. Be proud that you are taking your family on a week-long cruise over the holidays, but don’t brag too much. You never know who may be taking note of your travel plans.

Leave a spare key and emergency telephone number with a trusted neighbor or friend. In an emergency it may be necessary for someone to enter your home (water heater leak, etc.), so it is a good idea to leave a key with someone local.

Silence the ringer on your home telephone. One trick of the criminal trade is to stake out a house and call the phone number. If the phone rings and rings with no answer it is a safe bet no one is home. If the phone doesn’t ring at all, crooks may suspect they are dialing the wrong number, or someone is home and using the phone. Do not mention your travel plans on voicemail or answering machines.
Remove garage door openers from cars parked in the driveway. It is a good idea to leave a second car parked in the driveway, however remove the garage door opener. Burglars can easily break a window and open your garage with the click of a button.

Lock garage entry doors. If you live in a home with an attached garage, lock the door from the garage to the home when leaving for Christmas vacation. Garage doors have been known to malfunction, or be manually forced up, allowing access to your home.

Trim shrubbery and trees close to your home. Overgrown shrubs provide the perfect cover for a burglar working to pry open a window.

Shopping Safety Tips

Use the buddy system. It is always a good idea to shop in pairs as thieves are less likely to target two or more individuals.

Lock your purchases in the trunk. An electronics store bag filled with goodies sitting on the back seat in plain view is tempting for a smash-and-grab burglar.

If shopping at an outdoor mall or outlet stores, consider moving your car when you drop off presents. No one likes to lug around too many items from store to store, so most people return to their cars several times to drop off purchases. When you do this, consider moving your car a few lanes away. Thieves like to stake out parking lots for people leaving purchases in their car and returning to stores. If they see you get in and drive away they will likely assume your shopping trip is over and look for another target.

Ask for a security officer escort. If you approach your car and see an unsavory character staked out nearby, return to the store and ask for someone to walk you to your car. Most store security personnel are used to this, so there is no need to feel embarrassed. Besides, better to be safe than sorry!

Have keys ready, and don’t take your time getting in your car. There is nothing more tempting to a “goblin” than a lone shopper approaching a car while digging through a purse or pockets for keys. With your head down and your attention diverted you are an easy target. Find your keys before you leave the store and have them in hand. Walk quickly and confidently to your vehicle, and
unlock, enter and lock the doors in quick fashion. Once safely inside you can verify receipts, store away packages, etc.

**Park in well-lit areas.** If you know you will be shopping for a long time, anticipate leaving a dark parking lot and look for light poles to park under. Besides providing light, light poles also serve as a reference point in a crowded parking lot to remind you where you parked your car.

**Parents, park next to the shopping cart return area.** When you are finished shopping it is nice to put Junior in the car seat and return the shopping cart one lane away, rather than walking fifty feet away with Junior alone in the car, or you toting him and three bags of groceries.

**When shopping – bring only the bank cards and cash you need** – do not travel with all of your financial information, bank cards, social security card and other information in one wallet or bag.

**If someone does try to steal from you, do not resist.** Your personal safety is far more important than your property. Instead, become a good witness.

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**Indian River State College**

**Campus Safety and Security**

We will not be victims, we will not be perpetrators, and above all else, we will not be bystanders!