

Safety Tips

This resource includes some tips to help keep you safe and healthy! For more information about how to maintain your mental and physical health, as well as our social connections, check out our [Community Safety Resources](#). For more resources, contact the Community Safety program or start a Neighbors Together group.

At Home

- Make sure all doors and windows have secondary locks (deadbolts, dowels, etc.) and use them.
- Don't hide spare keys in mailboxes, planters or under doormats. Consider using a lock box with a code or electronic key.
- Make sure that dark areas and entrances have outdoor lights that are turned on after dark or are motion activated. A soft warm glow is the best type of illumination to see and identify people.
- Keep trees and shrubbery trimmed and thinned so they do not conceal doors and windows.
- Consider safe deposit boxes for valuable collections, jewelry you don't wear often, stock bonds, etc.
- Lock your vehicle and remove any valuables and bags, even when parking in your driveway.

Strangers at your door

- Use caution anytime there is a stranger at your door.
- If you receive an unexpected sales call or delivery, ask for identification to confirm the legitimacy before giving out any personal information.
- Be aware of scams that take advantage of people's generosity. Most companies and charities will not ask for personal information over the phone or in an email or text.
- Investigate charities before making donations. Ask how the funds will be used.

Package theft

- Network with neighbors to collect packages for someone if they are not home.
- Have packages delivered to your job, a P.O. box or an alternative location (example, an Amazon deposit box at various grocery stores). Check with your employer for instructions and policies related to having personal packages delivered to work.
- Install a smart lock, video doorbells, motion detectors and security cameras on your property. These are only as strong as your WIFI, so use a strong WIFI password and consider purchasing an online security suite.

Leaving for Extended Periods of Time

- Ask a trusted family member, friend or neighbor to watch your home.
- Do not post pictures of airports, plane tickets or vacation destinations on social media.
- Use timers to turn lights on and off while you are away.
- Plan for delivery of mail, newspapers and packages. Ask the Post Office to hold your mail or ask someone you trust to pick it up for you.

How to Prevent Your Purse or Bag from Being Stolen

- Hold your purse or bag the way a football player carries a football. Hug it to your ribs with one arm – away from the curb to avoid someone on a motorcycle or in a car grabbing it. If someone does grab your purse or bag, give it up, then yell for help as you run to safety. Do NOT risk injury by fighting for your purse or bag.
- Keep your valuables, especially keys, in a coat or pants pocket so you won't lose them if someone takes your purse or bag. Then you won't be tempted to fight for it.
- You can also carry any important documents like a passport, driver's license, debit/credit cards and most of your money in a travel security wallet or passport holder that can be worn under your clothing.
- Carry pepper spray and a personal noisemaker within easy reach.

Tips for Shopping During the Fall, Winter, and Holiday Seasons

- Shop during the day when possible.
- When shopping after dark, do so with a friend or family member.
- Dress casually and comfortably.
- Leave expensive jewelry at home.
- Always carry a government issued photo driver's license or identification card.
- Pay for purchases with a check or credit/debit card when possible to avoid carrying large amounts of cash. Only carry the checks, credit card or amount of cash you need for your shopping trip. Notify the credit card issuer immediately if a credit card is lost, stolen or misused.
- Stay aware of your surroundings and avoid carrying too many packages or shopping bags. It is important to have clear visibility and freedom of movement to avoid mishaps.
- If you need assistance to carry your bags, ask for it. It never hurts to ask for the retail store, grocery store or mall concierge to assign someone to help you out of the store or to your car.
- Park in a well-lit space, be certain the car is locked, the windows are closed, and shopping bags and gifts are stored in the trunk before you walk away. Avoid putting bags and purses in the trunk when you arrive at a shopping center.

After the Holidays

- Don't leave boxes from expensive toys, electronics or other gifts on the street for garbage collections. Compress large boxes and place them in black garbage bags for pick-up. For recycling, boxes, cut the pieces into smaller pieces, and install them at the bottom of the bin.
- Add new items to your home inventory. Take photos or videos of all items of value. Make a list of each item's make, model, serial number and other identifiable information.
- Engrave new items to help identify them in the event they are stolen. Upload photos to an online server in case your phone or laptop gets stolen.

Shopping and Safety Tips Regarding Children

- If possible, leave small children at home with someone you trust.
- Teach children to stay close to their parents/caretaker while shopping.
- Teach children to go to a store clerk or security guard and ask for help if the child becomes separated from their caretaker.
- Teach children their full name, address and telephone number to give to police officers or store security.
- Always go with a child to the restroom.
- A child should never be allowed to go to the car alone and should never be left alone in the car.
- Teach children to recognize and call for help if a stranger is bothering them. It is always better to be safe than to be polite.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic

- Avoid going to stores in person as much as possible.
- Shop online as much as possible — many local stores allow for purchases over the web and with delivery or curbside pickup.
- If you shop in person you **MUST** wear a mask over your nose and mouth and keep at least six feet of distance between you and other shoppers.
- Avoid touching your face and mask.
- Avoid touching objects in store unless you are certain you will buy them.
- Avoid touching high contact surfaces such as doorknobs, railings and countertops.
- When you arrive at your vehicle, clean your hands with hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- When you arrive home, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.