

# NEWS RELEASE



## GARDEN CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

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The holiday season is always a special time of year. It is also a time when busy people become preoccupied and vulnerable to theft and other holiday crime. We can never be too careful, too prepared, or too aware. The Garden City Police Department wishes you a safe, happy, and peaceful holiday season and offers the following tips:

### DRIVING

- If you must shop at night, park in a well-lit area and lock your vehicle. Also, close all windows.
- Avoid parking next to large vehicles, vans, trucks with camper shells, or cars with tinted windows.
- Park as close as you can to your destination and take notice of where you parked.
- Never leave your car unoccupied with the motor running or with children inside.
- Avoid leaving packages or valuables inside your vehicle where they can be seen by potential thieves.
- When approaching or leaving your vehicle, be aware of your surroundings.
- Do not approach your car alone if suspicious people are in the area.
- Do not roll down your window if a stranger approaches; talk through the glass or drive away.

### HOME

- Ensure pocketbooks, bags, and keys are NOT visible through windows, doors, etc.
- Ensure all doors and windows are locked when you leave the house, even for a few minutes.
- Ensure alarm and video surveillance systems are in good working order.
- When leaving home for extended periods, ask a neighbor or family member to watch your house.
- Have someone pick up your newspapers, and mail. In addition, have packages delivered to an alternate address where someone is available to receive them or arrange for pick-up of packages at a depot.
- Indoor and outdoor lights should be on automatic timers.
- Leave a radio or television on so the house looks and sounds occupied.
- Gifts should not be visible through the windows and doors of your home.
- Be aware that criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts.
- Ensure all doors, especially patio doors, are alarmed and have additional locking devices. There is a recent trend in Nassau County in which suspects attempt to enter a residence during the overnight hours to obtain keys for vehicles parked in the driveway.

### LEAVING HOME

- Plan your trip carefully and avoid getting lost by knowing the routes you will be taking.
- Tell someone when and where you are going and what time you expect to return home.
- When leaving home, leave interior and exterior lights on, and if equipped, activate your alarm system and surveillance systems. Be aware of anyone watching or following you when you leave.
- Ensure your car has a full gas tank, and keep your doors locked and windows closed.
- Do not post that you are going on vacation on social media sites.
- Ensure your surveillance systems are on and notification alerts, if equipped, are activated.

### AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE (ATM)

- When using an ATM at night, choose locations that are well-lit and secure.
- Protect your PIN by shielding the ATM keypad from anyone standing near you.
- Do not throw your ATM receipt away at the ATM location.

## **SHOPPING**

- Shop during daylight hours whenever possible. At night, shop with a friend or family member.
- Dress casually and comfortably; avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- If possible, avoid carrying a purse or wallet. They are easy targets for thieves in crowded areas.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash; pay for purchases with a check or credit card when possible.
- Keep cash in your front pocket.
- Notify the credit card issuer immediately if your credit card is lost, stolen, or misused.
- Keep a record of all of your credit card numbers in a safe place at home.
- Avoid overloading yourself with packages, and stay alert at all times.
- Be sure to locate your keys before going to your car.
- Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason.
- Beware of persons attempting to distract you with the intention of taking your money or belongings.
- If you have a key chain or fob with a panic button, be prepared to use it if you feel threatened.
- When leaving the shopping center, ensure that no one is following you.
- Call 911 when followed and drive directly to a Police Station or area where people are present.
- Leave small children at home with a trusted babysitter or family member if possible.
- Teach children to stay close to you at all times while shopping.
- Teach your children to go to a store clerk or security officer if they become separated from you.
- Ensure your children know their full name, address, and telephone number.
- Never allow children to make unaccompanied trips to the restroom.
- Children should never be allowed to go to the car alone and should never be left alone in the car.