

12 TIPS OF CHRISTMAS (CRIME PREVENTION)

The holiday season is upon us, and many will be spending time shopping for gifts and attending parties and celebrations, and charities will be collecting much-needed donations.

Festive activities will be in the spotlight, and crime prevention may not, so it is important for Calgarians to ensure they are doing what they can to prevent crime.

1. On the first day of Christmas, you can prevent crime by keeping your car safe from break-ins and thefts.
 - Park in well-lit, traveled areas
 - Keep valuables and gifts out of site in the trunk, and do not to leave them in the vehicle for long periods of time
 - Don't leave your keys in the car while it is running
 - Use a steering-wheel lock and/or car alarm to make your vehicle less attractive to thieves
 - Ensure your doors are locked (and windows on child-lock) once everyone is inside to avoid unwanted visitors from entering your vehicle.

2. On the second day of Christmas, you can prevent crime by talking to youth about stranger danger.
 - Teach kids to ask store clerks or mall security if they become separated from you.
 - Never leave kids alone in the car
 - If you have a cell phone, ensure your kids have the phone number handy to reach you, and they know where they can go to access a phone (stores, info-desk, security and payphones).
 - If dropping youth off to shop on their own, establish a meeting place inside the establishment for pick-up (not in the parking lot or at doorways)
 - For younger ages, use a safety word.

3. On the third day of Christmas, you can prevent crime by being a safe driver on the road.
 - Obey all traffic signals
 - Reduce speed and exercise caution when driving in inclement weather
 - Know your route, and have an alternate one planned in the case of unforeseen circumstances.
 - Pull over to answer your phone, or tend to other distracting events such as pets/kids, eating, reading a map, texting, etc.

4. On the fourth day of Christmas, you can prevent crime by keeping your information safe when shopping online.
 - Type the store's URL directly in your browser rather than browse to online retailers through a search engine where you may encounter malicious links,
 - Use a different password for each site you must sign in for and don't let the browser store passwords for you.

- Always look for the https prefix in the URL and the padlock icon in the browser's status bar. (If you shop at an online retailer that uses SSL encryption, make sure the address bar turns green as a signal that the page is secure.)
 - Monitor your PayPal account and keep track of your purchases.
 - Use a credit card rather than a debit card online so you can stop payments quickly in the event of a problem.
 - Be cautious with e-mails claiming to be shipping confirmation or package alerts that force you to open a file attachment. Delete any message that claims to provide tracking information but doesn't include a tracking number.
5. On the fifth day of Christmas, you can prevent crime, by identifying fraudulent scams to stay away from.
- If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.
 - If making a purchase online or through classified ads, arrange to meet at a neutral, public location and do not go alone. You don't know who is on the other side of the transaction.
 - You have the right to check out any caller by requesting written information, a call back number, references and time to think over the offer.
 - Do some research online to get to know the current scams
<http://www.phonebusters.com/english/recognizeit.html>
 - The Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC) is the central agency in Canada that collects information and criminal intelligence on Mass Marketing Fraud (telemarketing), advanced-fee fraud letters (Nigerian letters), internet fraud and identity theft complaints from Canadian and American consumers and victims. Report Fraud to The Canadian Anti- Fraud Centre toll free at 1-888-495-8501 or via e-mail at info@antifraudcentre.ca
6. On the sixth day of Christmas, you can prevent crime if making donations to canvassers for charities.
- Ask for legitimate identification – only donate to registered charities.
 - Contact the Canada Revenue Agency to see if the charity is registered at <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/charities/>
 - If you are approached by someone suspicious, call police at 403-266-1234
 - Do not feel pressure to donate right away – ask for information on how you can donate at a later time
7. On the seventh day of Christmas, you can prevent crime when sending gifts.
- Do not send cash in the mail
 - Communicate with your recipient to ensure they are expecting a parcel
 - When sending a gift or gift card, consider using registered mail or a courier service so parcels can be tracked and insured
8. On the eighth day of Christmas, you can prevent crime by keeping your home safe from break-ins.

- Keep any ladders used for putting lights up away from the home so criminals cannot use them to climb up to your windows
- Do not display gifts in a window or doorway
- Properly dispose of gift packaging and boxes. Do not leave these outside for all to see, as this will advertise the contents of your home to thieves. Put inside garbage bags or take directly to recycling depots.

9. On the ninth day of Christmas, you can prevent crime by securing your home before you go away.

- Make your home looks lived in: Put lights, radios and TVs on variable timers. Have someone stay inside your home for a while each day if possible.
- Have a trusted neighbour/friend/family member check on your home daily, collect your mail, and shovel your walks.
- If you're leaving a vehicle outside your house, have someone move its position periodically, to make it appear as if it is being used.
- Lock-up tools, BBQs and ladders and make sure they are out of sight; set and test your timers; lock and check doors and windows; and leave shades and blinds in normal positions.
- Turn off the telephone ringer so no one knows your home is empty (and don't leave outgoing phone or e-mail messages saying you are away).
- Read your home insurance policy to find out how often your home needs to be checked in order to maintain your coverage.

10. On the tenth day of Christmas, you can prevent crime by reporting suspicious behaviour to police.

- If you see any suspicious activity in your neighbourhood, call police at 403-266-1234. Call 911 for a crime in progress.
- You may submit an anonymous crime tip to Crime Stoppers: TALK: 1-800-222-8477; TYPE: tttTIPS.com; TEXT: tttTIPS to 274637

11. On the eleventh day of Christmas, you can prevent crime by recognizing domestic violence and taking action.

- Domestic violence can be seen through various avenues for example in the workplace, neighbours, etc. It takes a community to address domestic violence and it is important to call for help.
- The holidays can be a stressful time and the affects of difficult times are felt long before they get to a point of crisis. It is important for people seek help before they get to that point.
- Calling police for help does not mean charges will be laid automatically, our goal is public safety and to assist families in getting the help they need.

12. On the twelfth day of Christmas, you can prevent crime by getting home from the party safely.

- Do not leave your drink unattended when at parties or other social events, to avoid the risk of someone altering it.

- Never drink and drive – and convince others do the same
- If going to a holiday party, pre-arrange transportation to ensure a safe ride home (taxi cabs, designated drivers, public transportation)
- When leaving a licensed establishment, ensure you and your friends get home safely. Do not walk outside by yourself.
- Always let friends or family know where you plan on going for the evening, and be accountable for notifying them when you are home safely.
- When taking a cab, note the company and number on the vehicle for accountability purposes and to track down incase you leave something behind.
- Calgarians are reminded to always be aware of their surroundings. Stay in busy, well-lit areas and avoid dark, deserted places. If you are suspicious of someone, trust your instincts and scream or use a personal emergency alarm to attract attention.
- Stay in groups when travelling to and from a venue, at a function, or taking public transit and taxi cabs.