

C District Safety Advice for Christmas



**POLICE SERVICE
of NORTHERN IRELAND**

DON'T GIVE A GIFT TO A CRIMINAL THIS CHRISTMAS

Christmas should be a happy and joyous time of year. It should be a time to relax and enjoy the festive season. This Christmas make sure that you and your property are safe and secure by taking a few simple precautions.

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

Love it or loathe it, you simply can't get away from it. Avoid unnecessary risks whilst purchasing gifts.

- ◆ Avoid carrying large amounts of cash on your person. Certainly never keep a wallet in a back trouser pocket. Keep handbags closed and never leave unattended in a shopping trolley.
- ◆ Never keep your chequebook and cheque card together and never write down PIN numbers, either on them or elsewhere.



◆ Use ATMs in busy areas and make sure you use a well-lit ATM at night. Be wary when entering your PIN. Choose another ATM elsewhere if you feel someone is trying to watch you.

◆ Don't feel embarrassed if a shop asks for additional proof of identity. It is for your protection.

◆ If shopping on the Internet be wary of dealing with any company, which only gives a PO Box number. Obtain a business address for the company. Always keep a copy of the advert/web page/e-mail. Use companies personally recommended to you by others and which have an encryption facility which scrambles your card details whilst in transit. Safe sites are those that display a padlock at the bottom when the payment screen is selected. Beware of Internet scams. If a product or price seems too good to be true then it probably is!

◆ If using a credit card always ensure that your receipt is discarded properly when no longer required otherwise a thief could steal your details. The use of a shredder is the best way to ensure this does not happen.



VEHICLE SECURITY

- ◆ Never leave shopping or Christmas presents in full view. If they can be seen they can be stolen. Always lock your possessions away out of sight in the boot.
- ◆ When leaving your vehicle always ensure you take your keys from the ignition even if it is only for a short period eg. Filling up fuel at a garage forecourt.
- ◆ Lock your vehicle and close windows every time you leave your vehicle.



◆ Take all valuables from your car when you leave it. Mobile phones, chequebooks, wallets, sat navs etc. are a temptation to thieves.

◆ Think about where you park. Try to park in a well-lit busy area. Avoid secluded dark areas.

◆ In frosty weather please do not leave your car running to heat up, as it only makes it easier for the thief to steal it and sadly your car insurance will not cover for theft in these circumstances.



Property Marking....

The main Crime Prevention purpose of marking your property is to make it less attractive to thieves to steal it in the first place as they know that if they are caught in possession of it by the Police and the Police can quickly establish it is stolen property, they are in trouble! In addition, the traceable property may be more difficult for them to "cash in" with another criminal or to a willing purchaser of the item. Of course it also greatly enhances the chances of you being re-united with the item which is important too.

UV pen marking

UV pen marking still has a role to play in Crime Prevention.

The principle here is that you mark your postcode

followed by the house number or name on property with an UV pen which is invisible to the naked eye. You can display stickers usually supplied with the pen to illustrate that you have done this. Police have access to UV lights which show up postcodes etc when shone on your UV mark of your postcode.



Safety while out socialising

With a little planning you can have a great night out. If you are going to drink alcohol follow these useful tips:

- ◆ Have something to eat before you go out.
- ◆ When meeting up with your friends agree a time and safe place for meeting. Have each others' mobile numbers in case you are running late or have a change of plans.
- ◆ If you are using a taxi call a firm you know and pre-book the taxi for coming home. Make sure you ask for the name of the driver who will be collecting you and check with them before getting in the car.
- ◆ When out with friends, keep an eye on each other and try not to get separated.
- ◆ Know your limits and drink at your own speed. Don't get involved in rounds, as you will be drinking to keep up with the fastest person.
- ◆ Don't mix your drinks and be aware of the different strengths of alcohol available. Drinking too much alcohol can damage your health. Health guidelines suggest no more than 3 units of alcohol a day for women and 4 for men.

- ◆ Consider having a glass of water or soft drink in between your alcoholic drinks.

Remember - If you plan to take the car on a night out remember to drink soft drinks. Even a small amount of alcohol will affect your judgement and driving.



Prevention - Some useful tips for preventing drink spiking:

- ◆ Don't leave your drink unattended at any time or share drinks with anyone else.
- ◆ Be wary of accepting drinks from a stranger or someone you do not completely trust. If someone offers to buy you a drink, go to the bar with them to watch the drink being poured and passed directly to you.
- ◆ If your drink looks different from normal or appears to have been 'topped up' do not consume it.
- ◆ Soft drinks including tea & coffee can be spiked.
- ◆ To prevent anything from being added to your drink you can place your hand over the top of the glass or your thumb over the top of the bottle.

Not all burglars break into homes - some will try to trick or con their way in.

They are known as bogus callers and will pretend to be on official business from respectable concerns such as the Utility companies - Water, Electricity and Gas - or the Council. They may claim to be tradesmen or workmen calling to carry out urgent repairs (also called Doorstep Callers).

Bogus callers or Doorstep Callers succeed because they sound believable, so don't be fooled. Make sure in your own mind that they are whom they claim to be by following these simple steps:

- Think before you open the door - use your chain and spy hole or look out of the window to see if you recognise them.
- Ask callers for proof of identity.
- Beware of callers who attempt to distract you by claiming that they have seen something untoward in your rear garden or

somewhere which may encourage you to leave your house - they may have an accomplice awaiting this distraction.

- If you are not convinced of the identity of the caller, don't let them in. Ask the caller to come back later and arrange for a friend, relative or neighbour to be present on their return or ask the caller to contact this person.

Consider the use of the QUICK CHECK scheme. This is a FREE telephone service, which is available 24 hours a day all year round to residents throughout Northern Ireland. Most callers at your home will be genuine, however there are some who may not be. These callers are called "Bogus callers" or "Distraction Burglars" who may want to trick their way into your home to steal from you. If you are in any doubt simply get the caller checked out with **QUICK CHECK on freephone 0800 013 22 90**.

Your call will be answered personally and promptly by a trained operator. They will check the company on your behalf, that the person at your door is genuine, if not they will tell you not to let the person in and immediately contact the police for you.

