



CHRISTMAS SECURITY

As everyone is busy over the Christmas period, it's easy to forget about the security of your home and property – and even your own personal safety! Here are some tips help protect yourself:

AT HOME

Keep all unattended doors and windows locked at all times – you'd be surprised at how many "walk in" burglaries there are. Remove any keys and keep them out of sight, but ensure all residents know where they are in case of emergency. Close internal doors at night to help prevent the spread of fire and smoke.

Put lights on timer switches whenever you go out, and tune a radio into a talk station to give the impression that someone is at home. As all the neighbours will probably have their Christmas lights on, a dark house will stand out as being unoccupied.

Close the curtains or blinds at dusk to make sure thieves can't see through your windows and see what you've got to steal or that you're on your own.

Avoid advertising that you're going to be away on Facebook or other social media – people other than your friends could be seeing your posts.

After Christmas, don't leave the boxes from your presents where people can see them - you'll be advertising what's in the house!

VEHICLES

Keep your vehicles locked and alarmed (if you have one) at all times. Ensure you leave nothing on show, tempting thieves to break in and see what else is in there! Keep any shopping in the boot out of sight, and remove the items as soon as you can.

SHOPPING ONLINE

Make sure you check the web address. Criminals can set up fake website that have a similar look and web address to the genuine site.

Check that it is a secure site when buying anything online. If you are entering your personal or financial details, look out for a locked padlock sign (usually in the top right-hand corner). The web address should start with **https** – this means your connection to the site is secure.

Don't pay for goods or services by bank transfer unless you know and trust the person. 65% of reported frauds were linked to online auction sites.

GOING OUT

It's always busy when you're shopping or going out at Christmas, so watch out for pickpockets. Keep any wallets and purses in a zipped up pocket if possible.

Get some cash before you go out, so you don't need to use a cash machine. If you have to get more money, never keep your PIN number in your purse or wallet, and always make sure no-one can see your number.

If you think you'll drink – get a taxi! Police stops and breath tests will be increased at this time of year.

Guard your drink – don't leave any drinks unattended to prevent the risk of drink spiking.

Look out for each other! Stay with your friends and don't go off alone, especially if you have overindulged!

TAXIS

Try to book a taxi before you go out and agree a price for the journey. Use a recognised taxi rank if you haven't planned your journey, and look out for a taxi badge and a meter. Taxis that don't have a For Hire light are not allowed to pick up passengers that haven't booked and hail them from the street. Any passenger that does travel with them after hailing them will be uninsured. Don't let a drunk friend take a taxi on their own - having a sober friend with them protects both the passenger and the driver.

Remember, **DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE!**

