



Hillsborough County Florida

Holiday Safety Guide

Shopping

- Try to shop in daylight hours and while the stores are less crowded. If you have to go after dark, take someone with you or tell someone where you're going and when you'll be back, and park in a well lighted area. If the mall or restaurant offers a valet service, consider using it.
- Carry your cell phone and stay alert to your surroundings. Report suspicious activity and be ready to provide your exact location.
- When dressing for that shopping trip : avoid wearing expensive watches or flashy jewelry; dress comfortably; wear good walking shoes or sneakers, leave your purse or wallet at home and carry only what you will need. (Tuck your driver's license, insurance card, credit card/debit card/check/cash into a front pants pocket or cell phone case).
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash and pay for your purchases by check, debit or credit. Make sure you keep an eye on your credit card when it is being processed and make sure you get it back after the transaction. Keep your account information and phone numbers in a safe place and immediately report any lost, stolen or misused cards.
- While shopping avoid carrying any large packages or bulky items. Ask for help from the people with you or another trusted source such as security or a valet.

Using ATMs

- Be alert and stay aware of your surroundings while completing transactions. Avoid anyone who looks suspicious. Only use machines that do not appear to be tampered with.
- Be prepared to make your transaction as soon as you get to the ATM. Avoid standing there filling out deposit envelopes or unnecessarily checking account balances.
- Choose an ATM in a busy area. Use one with a security camera and protect your PIN.
- Try to use them during daylight hours or in well-lighted areas.
- Plan to use the ATM while a family member or trusted friend is with you. Better yet get cash back at the register, if you can.
- Do not stand at the machine counting your money. Go directly to your car or indoors to a safe place first.

Board of County Commissioner goals are to reduce property crime, violent crime and overall crime by 2015 . These tips are intended to increase your awareness and help avoid crime. If you have a proven prevention or awareness tip that can be shared, please fax it to 276-2630 for consideration and possible distribution. If you have questions , regarding this tip please call 276-2888.

Parking

- Keep your doors locked when driving and always lock your vehicle.
- Try to park in well lighted areas and as close to the establishment as possible.
- Keep all valuables and shopping bags out of sight.
- Remember where you parked your vehicle.
- Walk with someone—a friend, relative, or security. Or, plan to leave with large "friendly" groups.
- Have your keys in your hand before you leave an establishment.
- Activate your car alarm remotely in an emergency.
- Use your cell phone to report suspicious activity.

Parties or Social Gatherings

- Celebrate responsibly. If necessary, designate a driver, call a taxi, or make arrangements to stay where you are if you become intoxicated or feel too tired to driver.
- Stay away from potentially dangerous situations.
- Avoid celebrating with gunfire of any kind.

At Home

- Do not display gifts in a window or entryway.
- Be aware of holiday cons and schemes to defraud you.
- Only give to charities that you know or have dealt with before.
- Do not get out of your car, if someone suspicious is in your driveway or yard.
- After the presents have been opened, don't place intact boxes or packaging from expensive items at the curb.

Vacationing Away from Home

- Leave emergency contact information with a trusted neighbor and inform your family of where you'll be, what route you are taking, and when to expect you home.
- If you are going on vacation, have someone check on your home, collect your mail, get your newspaper, and take-in trash cans.
- If traveling by vehicle know where you are going and how to get back. Check for construction detours and weather conditions. Select well-traveled and lighted thoroughfares. Remember that roads that are congested during rush hour could be very lightly traveled at other hours. If possible use freeways and arterial streets in order to avoid less-traveled roads.
- For out of state travel, you can get national traffic and road closure information at the Federal Highway Administration's webpage: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/trafficinfo/index.htm>. Try to do most of your driving during daylight hours and avoid night driving in unfamiliar locations, if possible.
- Keep your doors locked and windows rolled up. Maintain at least a 1/2 tank of fuel and have your vehicle in good repair for the trip. Check your spare tire and all fluid levels.
- Charge your cell phone before you leave home and take your travel charger, if you have one.
- Program emergency numbers into your cell phone. For example on the highway you might need to dial *55 for the Highway Patrol.