

The Bedford Police Department would like to wish the entire Neighborhood Watch groups a very happy and safe holiday season and a very prosperous 2014! With that being said we would like to offer the following tips and suggestions to make your holiday season more enjoyable.

Shopping Tips

- Keep your purse close to your body and never leave it in a shopping cart even if you are with the cart.
- Avoid talking on cell phones as you walk through malls and parking lots. Phone conversations are a distraction that makes you vulnerable to robbers.
- Don't resist if someone tries to take any of your belongings. Don't chase someone who robs you, they may have a weapon. Instead call 911.
- If you go to an automatic teller machine for cash, check for people around and make sure it is well lit and in a safe location.
- Carry only the credit cards you need and avoid carrying large amounts of cash.
- Do not buy more than you can carry.
- If you make a purchase with your credit card or debit card, make sure you conceal the card to prevent someone from taking a cell phone picture of your card that captures the number, expiration date and or security code.
- If you are shopping with small children make a plan in case you are separated from each other.

Online shopping

- Beware of the "a good deal" scams. Things are not always what they appear to be.
- Before surfing the internet, secure your personal computers by updating security software.
- Keep your personal information private and your passwords secure.
- When ordering on-line use a credit card instead of a debit card. It is much easier to cancel a credit card if an account number is illegally obtained.
- Be cautious of e-mails claiming to contain pictures in attached files, as the files may contain viruses. Only open attachments from known senders. Always run a virus scan on an attachment before opening.
- Always compare the link in the e-mail to the web address link you are directed to and determine if they match.

- Log on directly to the official Web site for the business identified in the e-mail, instead of “linking” to it from an unsolicited e-mail. If the e-mail appears to be from your bank, credit card issuer, or other company you deal with frequently, your statements or official correspondence from the business will provide the proper contact information.
- Never provide your personal information such as your social security number or date of birth to anyone on-line.

Car Safety

- When parking your vehicle to go shopping, remember where you parked it! Always park in a well-lit and well-traveled area. Do not park in a remote dark area.
- When you return to your vehicle, scan the interior of your car to be sure no one is hiding inside. Check to see if you are being followed.
- Have your keys in hand when approaching your vehicle. You will be ready to unlock the door and will not be delayed by fumbling and looking for your keys. Be prepared to use the panic alarm on your keys if needed.
- When storing items purchased at the stores, place them out of sight. The best place is in a locked trunk.
- Do not leave your purse, wallet, or cellular telephone in plain view and always keep these items secured on your person.
- Drive defensively. Traffic is heavier during the holidays. Drivers may also have indulged in too much holiday spirits.

Home Safety

- Always lock your doors and windows, even if you plan to be out for a short amount of time.
- Leave lights turned on both inside and outside your residence after dark. Criminals do not like bright places.
- If you plan on being away from home for several days, make arrangements to have someone pick up your mail and newspapers. An overstuffed mailbox is sure sign that no one is home and burglars are tempted to check those envelopes for holiday gifts. The use of automatic lights inside the home will give an appearance that someone is present.
- Also plan to have someone plow your driveway in the event of a storm while you are away.

- Contact the Bedford Police Department for a vacant property check if you plan to be away from your residence for any substantial period of time.
- Large displays of holiday gifts should not be visible through the windows and doors of your home.
- When setting up a Christmas tree or other holiday display, make sure doorways and passageways are clear inside your home.
- Be sure your Christmas tree is mounted on a sturdy base so children, elderly persons or family pets cannot pull it over on themselves.
- If you use lights on your Christmas tree ensure the wiring is not damaged or frayed. Frayed or damaged wiring may cause a fire.
- If you are purchasing toys for small children, be sure that they are safe. You will be surprised what a small child can swallow or what can injure them.

Partying Tips

- Have something to eat before consuming alcoholic beverages;
- Eat high protein foods that will stay in your stomach longer and slow the absorption of alcohol into your system;
- Remember only time will eliminate the alcohol from your body;
- Have a designated driver or a cab to ensure your safe travels home.
- Know your safe limit; and never drink and drive.

Thank you for taking a moment to read this and remember, help keep an eye on Bedford, “See Something, Say Something.”