



Holiday Crime Prevention Tip of the Day: Parking Lot Safety

Parking Lots / Walking to and from the Store:

- Avoid shopping alone, there is safety in numbers.
- Park in a high visibility area with good lighting and plenty of other shoppers/pedestrian traffic.
- Try not to park next to vehicles with dark window tint or other concealment.
- Don't leave anything in plain view! Put shopping bags, packages and other valuables in the trunk. If a potential thief is walking by your vehicle and doesn't see anything inside, it drastically reduces the chances they will break in.
- Make sure the vehicle is locked and the alarm is set.
- Have a loud whistle on your keychain, and use it if you feel in danger. Start shouting for help. Criminals want to go unnoticed, so drawing attention so others can hear will reduce the chance that you will be a victim.
- Have your keys in your hand. While returning to your vehicle, you don't want to be distracted digging for your keys.
- Be alert and aware of your surroundings at all times. Don't just park and get out. Do a quick scan of the lot to make sure no one is looking at you or approaching you. Make eye contact with others as you walk. This will allow you time to react and avoid being surprised.
- Walk briskly and confidently through the parking lot. Criminals choose a victim who looks like an easy target. Don't be distracted with your phone; have your head on a swivel as you walk.
- Be wary of strangers who attempt to start meaningless or odd conversations. This includes people giving you a sob story about needing money for food or gas. Many times these people work in PAIRS. Even though you are talking to a seemingly "harmless" person, the 2nd suspect might be coming up from behind you.
- WOMEN: If you carry a purse, carry it close to the body preferably in front. Avoid having the strap on your shoulder or across your body. If someone tries to grab your purse, you could get seriously injured by being thrown to the ground if you have straps attached/around body parts.
- Call us if you see any suspicious activity. You are our eyes and ears out there! 911 for emergencies and (205) 822-5300 for non-emergencies.

Check out our website for more Crime Prevention tips: <http://www.hooverpd.com/crime-prevention.php>