

Well, the holidays are upon us again so it's time for the usual holiday tips and reminders. Remember that there is an increase in the number of people and distractions around during this time of year, that means you MUST increase your awareness of what's going on and who is around you.

Remember the 3 A's of Crime Prevention

**

1. Be Aware of your surroundings at all times
2. Be Alert to suspicious people and vehicles
3. Avoid dangerous situations

If You Are Traveling

- Get an automatic timer for your lights
- Ask a neighbor to watch your home, pick up your mail and park in your driveway periodically

If You Are Out For The Evening

- Turn on lights, radio or a TV so that it looks like someone is home
- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave, even if it's just for a few minutes
- Don't display gifts where they can be seen from the outside

If You Are Out Shopping

- Stay alert and be aware of what's going on around you at all times
- Park in well-lit areas, and be sure to lock the car, close the windows and place all shopping bags and gifts in the trunk
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash; pay with a check or credit card whenever possible
- Pay attention to people walking in front of you and behind you. Be particularly observant when you are in crowded areas such as malls and stores

Protect Your Vehicle

- Always lock your vehicle and store all items out of sight

- Always lock your car and check it before you walk away
- If you take packages to the car but plan to return to the store or mall, drive to a new location. Criminals can be on the lookout for unsuspecting shoppers who simply drop their purchases into the trunk and then return to keep shopping.
- When returning to your vehicle (or home) have your keys in your hand ready to open the door. A few seconds may keep you from becoming a victim of crime.
- Most vehicles are equipped with factory car alarms, if you become startled or someone approaches you, push your vehicle's panic alarm. It may also prevent you from becoming a victim of crime.

Take Holiday Inventory

- The holidays are an excellent time to update or create your home inventory. Take photos or make videos of items, and list descriptions and serial numbers. Keep the photos or video in a

secure place for future reference. If your home is burglarized, having a detailed inventory can help identify stolen items and make insurance claims easier to file.

- Make sure that items like TVs, DVDs, VCRs, stereo equipment, cameras, camcorders, sports equipment, jewelry, silver, computers, home office equipment and power tools are on the list.

Stay safe and enjoy the holidays.

Sgt. Eric D. Brown, I.C.P.S.

Crime Prevention/Accreditation

Lancaster County Sheriff's Office

1941 Pageland Hwy.

Lancaster, SC 29720

(803) 313-2123

www.linkingcommunities.com/lcso

<http://twitter.com/lacoso>