



City of
Los Banos
At the Crossroads of California

LOS BANOS POLICE DEPARTMENT

PRESS RELEASE

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Holiday Safety Tips

November 23rd, 2011

With the Holiday season upon us the Los Banos Police Department would like to remind residents of several easy ways to keep your family and your belongings safe. Please share these Holiday Safety Tips with family, friends and neighbors.

AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINES (ATM)

- If you must use an ATM, choose one that is located inside a mall, or well-lighted location. Withdraw only the amount of cash you need.
- Protect your PIN by shielding the ATM keypad from anyone who is standing near you.

DRIVING

- Avoid driving alone or at night.
- Keep all car doors locked and windows closed while in or out of your car. Set your alarm or use an anti-theft device.
- If you must shop at night, park in a well-lighted area and shop with a friend.
- Park as close as you can to your destination and take notice of where you parked.
- Never leave your car unoccupied with the motor running or with children inside.
- Do not leave packages or valuables on the seat of your car. This creates a temptation for thieves. If you must leave something in the car, lock it in the trunk or put it out of sight. Often, property crimes are based on an opportunity and they are committed very quickly. An empty vehicle isn't as appealing as a vehicle with a purse on the front seat.
- Be sure to locate your keys prior to going to your car.

- Keep a secure hold on your purse, handbag and parcels. Do not put them down or on top of the car in order to open the door.
- When approaching and leaving your vehicle, be aware of your surroundings.
- Do not approach your car alone if there are suspicious people in the area.
- Consider asking mall or store security for an escort before leaving your shopping location.

PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION

- Mark gifts with your California Driver License or Identification Card number.
- Do not use your Social Security Number.
- For items that cannot be marked with an engraver, photograph or videotape the items.
- Document the serial numbers of all your valuable items and keep them in a safe place.

SHOPPING

- Shop during daylight hours whenever possible. If you must shop at night, go with a friend or family member.
- Dress casually and comfortably.
- Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- Always carry your California Driver License or Identification Card along with necessary cash, checks and/or a credit card you expect to use.
- Even though you are rushed and thinking about a thousand things, stay alert to your surroundings.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.
- Pay for purchases with a check or credit card when possible.
- Keep cash in your front pocket.
- Notify the credit card issuer immediately if your credit card is lost, stolen or misused.
- Keep a record of all of your credit card numbers in a safe place at home.
- Be extra careful if you do carry a wallet or purse. They are the prime targets of criminals in crowded shopping areas, transportation terminals, bus stops, and buses.
- Avoid overloading yourself with packages. It is important to have clear visibility and freedom of motion to avoid mishaps.
- Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason. At this time of year, "con-artists" may try various methods of distracting you with the intention of taking your money or belongings.

CHILDREN

- If possible, leave small children at home with a trusted babysitter.
- Teach your child to go to a store clerk and ask for help in case your child is separated from you.
- Talk to your children about using 911, stranger danger and reinforce the notion that they should remain close to you at all times in public places.
- Never allow children to make unaccompanied trips to the restroom.
- Children should never be allowed to go to the car alone and they should never be left alone in the car.
- Teach children their full name, address and telephone number to give to police officers or mall security. Teach children to immediately inform you if a stranger is bothering them.

AT HOME

- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave the house, even for a few minutes.
- When leaving home for an extended time, have a neighbor or family member watch your house and pick up your newspapers and mail.
- Consider leaving Indoor and outdoor lights on automatic timers.
- 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 doors and passageways are clear inside your home.

Anyone with information regarding a suspicious or criminal incident is strongly encouraged to contact the Los Banos Police Department at **(209) 827-7070** or by leaving an anonymous tip on the city web site at www.losbanos.org