

Boone Police to Step Up Shopping Checks

Written by Boone PD Press Release
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To prevent and detect criminal activity during this holiday season, the Boone Police Department is increasing vehicle, bike and foot patrols in the shopping districts. Each year nationally, non-violent crime increases during the holiday shopping season. This includes vehicle break-ins, shoplifting, and scams. The Boone Police Department is increasing patrols in the shopping districts to combat this increase. Officers, both uniformed and in plainclothes, will be on the lookout for suspicious activity. This marks the third year that Boone Police have increased detection and enforcement efforts during the holiday shopping season. "Our intent is to make our businesses less attractive to would-be criminals and more attractive for our visitors and citizens shopping this Christmas season" - Chief D. Crawford.

The number one goal for the Boone Police Department during this holiday shopping season is the safety of our visitors and residents. Towards that end we have compiled a listed of holiday shopping safety tips available at www.townofboone.net/departments/police/index.html and choose "Holiday Shopping Safety Tips" from the menu on the left.

Each year the holiday shopping season sees an increase in property related crimes and scams. Following are several tips from the Boone Police Department to make your holiday shopping safer.

Before Leaving Home

- Plan your shopping trip carefully. Know where you are going and what routes you will take to get there.
- If possible, arrange for a friend to go shopping with you. There is safety in numbers.
- Let someone know where you are going and what route you will be taking. Additionally, let them know when you expect to return.
- Leave your home secure, engage alarms and give the appearance that your home is occupied by leaving the lights on in the most frequently used rooms.
- Don't leave valuable items out in the open. Secure them in closets, safes, etc.

When Parking

- Always park in well-lit areas.
- Note the location of your vehicle in the parking lot to conveniently return after shopping.
- Always lock all your doors
- Remove all items, such as radar detectors, laptops or packages and hide them in the trunk, glove compartment, out of site.
- Avoid parking near vans or other vehicles with covered cargo areas.
- Avoid carrying large handbags. Carry only what is necessary.
- Look around the parking lot for suspicious persons before you exit your vehicle.
- Don't get out of your vehicle until you are ready. If you don't feel safe, stay in the car or drive away.

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While Shopping

- Keep your money and credit cards in your front pocket and try to limit the number of credit cards and cash you're carrying while shopping.
- To avoid being a victim of "Identity Theft", be aware of exposing credit cards, debit cards and other identification at the cash register and ATM's. Thieves will utilize cell phones to capture card information without your knowledge.
- Be cognizant of any other type of "Distraction" type of crimes that typically occur during this time of the year.

When Returning To Your Car

- Never leave the store with your arms full of packages. Use a courtesy cart.
- Have your car key in hand, ready to unlock your door.
- Check the parking lot for suspicious people and look around before you exit the store.
- Do not return to your vehicle if you see people loitering nearby.
- Carry a whistle or other audible device. If you feel threatened, use it. If you're inside your vehicle, lock your doors and honk your horn to attract attention.
- Check underneath, in front and in back of your car as you approach it.
- Check the front and rear passenger seats inside your car before you enter it.
- If you are planning on returning to the store, never leave your packages in plain view inside your vehicle. Lock them in the trunk or place them on the floor and cover them with a blanket or jacket.

ALWAYS BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS