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CRIME PREVENTION TIPS FROM EUGENE POLICE for NEIGHBORHOOD LEADERS

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**Holiday Safety and Security**

*Here are some tips for keeping safe during the holidays:*

- Ideally, don't leave *anything* in your car, but certainly don't leave any electronic devices, purses, wallets, backpacks, duffle bags, gym bags, filled shopping bags, closed cardboard boxes or, of course, gifts in plain sight.
- Don't assume your trunk is crime-proof. If thieves see you stashing purses or purchases in your trunk, you've provided a tempting target. If you leave the vehicle unattended while running other errands, such as to return to the store for more shopping, thieves can break into your car in your absence and use the internal lever to open the trunk. Safer options:
  - Schedule your day so that once you make your purchases you go directly home, rather than back into the store for more shopping or dinner, or
  - Have the store hold your packages for pickup when you are done for the day. If you have to leave valuables in the trunk, stash them at one location, then move the car to another location.
- Don't leave gifts in plain sight in your home. A classic picture window display of a Christmas tree surrounded by gifts can draw offenders to your home.
- Avoid having packages left, unprotected, on your front porch. Not only are they easy to steal, but they advertise the fact that you are not home. If unavoidable, make arrangements with a trusted neighbor to pick up any packages or flyers that show up at your door, or arrange to have the packages sent to another location where they can be immediately retrieved and secured.
- Don't leave home without taking at least basic vacation security precautions. Burglars know that people often leave for holiday visits, whether it be across town for a shared meal or out to the coast for an extended vacation. Arrange for a house sitter, alert attentive neighbors to watch over your home, install alarms or take other measures to make your home look occupied. Close curtains, but leave a TV, radio and/or timed lights on, to simulate your normal routine.
- If you return home to find you've been burglarized, don't go in! Go to a neighbor's home and call 9-1-1 for a possible burglary in-progress
- Beware of scams, particularly fake charities. Stick with those you know. You should verify any charity that asks you for money. Ask them to send a brochure. You can check them out through a watchdog group such as the American Institute of Philanthropy or the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance. If they refuse or try to pressure you for an immediate donation, you're dealing with a scam.
- Avoid fire hazards. Dry Christmas trees, combustibles piled against baseboard heaters, shorts in Christmas lights, worn extension cords, overheated wood stoves, clogged flues and unattended candles contribute to an increase in the rate of house fires at this time of year.
- Driving? Check the oil, gas, headlights, tail lights, brake lights, brake fluid, antifreeze, radiator water level and tire inflation before leaving home. This time of year it's a good idea to check road

conditions (503-976-7277) and toss snow chains in the trunk. Make sure someone knows your planned route and destination -- if you end up at the side of the road or stuck in a snowstorm, it's reassuring to know that someone knows where to come looking for you!

**For more information**

*Call (541) 682-5137, or e-mail the Eugene Police Crime Prevention Specialist at [policeprevention@ci.eugene.or.us](mailto:policeprevention@ci.eugene.or.us)*

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