



Have a safe, crime-free Christmas

The festive season is a time for giving, but sadly also for taking – the dark nights, social occasions, gifts and increased cash people have on them mean there are lots of attractive opportunities for criminals. We're working hard to keep you safe, but there are simple steps you can take to help us.

At home

- Don't leave Christmas presents under your tree if they are in view of windows or doors. Make sure windows and doors are kept locked
- Property-mark presents and valuables with your postcode, house number or name, then register them with Immobilise at www.immobilise.com. Note down model numbers and serial numbers of all electrical items
- Never keep large amounts of cash at home and check you have adequate home insurance
- Be mindful of what you post on social media – don't advertise you have expensive new gifts or that you're out and your home is therefore empty
- Make your house look occupied if you're not at home. Invest in a timer to turn your lights on or, if you can, ask a family member or neighbour to pop in and do it. If they can also open and close your curtains at random times of the day it helps prevent criminals from seeing a pattern, making it harder for them to target your home
- Dispose of boxes and rubbish discreetly. Leaving boxes outside will give away the fact that you have new and valuable items in the house

Personal safety

- When Christmas shopping, be aware of how much you are carrying with you. Things like smart phones, digital devices and extra cash to buy presents mean you could be the ideal target for thieves. Don't take out valuables you don't need
- When you are out and about at Christmas, don't leave your bag unattended. Keep your purse safe in an internal pocket, and never write down your PIN
- Don't leave your drink unattended. It takes a matter of seconds for someone to tamper with your drink
- Consider getting a personal safety alarm. Don't allow threats of crime to intimidate you into never going anywhere alone. Just be aware of what's going on around you and be confident that you can keep safe
- Plan your journey home. If you use a taxi, ensure it is registered. If you have to walk home, only walk with friends you know well, stick to well-lit and busy streets, and make sure someone knows the route you are taking

Vehicle security

- When you're out Christmas shopping, look for a well-lit, busy area to park in. For additional security look out for the Park Mark security approved car parks
- Make sure nothing is left on display in your car. Even small items can be tempting to a thief

- Avoid going back to your car to leave your shopping part-way through your trip. If you have to keep presents in the car, make sure they are out of view in the boot, the car is locked, and keep the receipts with you
- Car crime accounts for more than a quarter of all reported crime in the UK, so always lock your car and make sure windows are closed every time you leave it, even for very short periods
- Never leave your keys in the ignition while your vehicle is unattended, even for a few minutes. Thieves will steal cars that have been left with the engine running to defrost the windows

Christmas can sadly be a time when family tensions are heightened and domestic abuse can occur or increase. If you, or someone you know, is suffering any form of domestic abuse, call us on 101, or 999 in an emergency. Help is also available from Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Service – www.ndas.co or 0300 0120154

The festive season also presents extra fire hazards, from fairy lights to flammable decorations and Christmas trees. Find fire prevention advice at www.northantsfire.org.uk.

In the event of a fire get out, stay out and call 999.

To speak to our crime prevention team email crimeprevention@northants.pnn.police.uk