

CMPD PREPARED FOR BUSY HOLIDAY SEASON

Wednesday, November 25, 2009 – Charlotte, NC – With the onset of the winter holidays, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department is stepping up patrols and taking special precautions to ensure the safety of citizens and shoppers throughout the holiday season. Beginning this week, with one of the biggest shopping days of the year, police presence will increase and continue through New Years.

Funded through the Justice Assistance Grant (JAG), extra patrols have been added throughout the entire jurisdiction, providing heightened visibility, especially in high volume shopping areas. This includes all major shopping centers, malls, and superstores such as Walmart, Target, and Sams Club. The Department has allotted more than \$80,000 of JAG overtime funding to support this project.

The Department will be paying special attention to its known and repeat offenders while also employing the full support of its undercover officers who will be on the lookout for any criminal activity and suspicious behavior. Officers will have a special focus on crimes such as shoplifting and larceny from autos. The Department also plans to fully utilize crime prevention tools such as its Sky Watch Towers.

In addition to more police patrols, CMPD will collaborate with private security firms to combine efforts.

Emphasizing the crucial relationship between the community and law enforcement, CMPD will be working with local businesses to reinforce precautionary measures for money management and business safety. The Department is also encouraging citizens to take preventive steps to ensure the securing of their property and their personal safety and offers these tips for the holiday season:

Safety While Shopping

1. Pay with checks or credit cards when possible. Don't flash large amounts of cash.
2. Don't leave any purchases or your purse unattended while shopping or in a dressing room.
3. Try to carry as little as possible. Make multiple trips to your vehicle to store your purchases.
4. Never leave your children alone.
5. If your children get separated from you, teach them to find a cashier or a security officer and ask for help.
6. Report all suspicious activity. Call 911 with a description.

Safety in the Parking Lots

1. Park and walk in well-lit areas.
2. Walk with confidence be aware of people around you, and know where you parked.
3. Always lock your car doors after leaving or entering your car.
4. Have your keys in your hand so that you don't have to linger before entering your car. Check the back seat before you get in.
5. Don't leave packages on the car seats. Keep packages out of sight in the trunk or under a covered rear cargo area.

Home Holiday Safety

1. Make sure your home is well lit. Turn on outside lights, spotlights, motions lights, etc. Leave several lights on timers while you are away to give your home that lived in look.
2. Keep all shrubbery trimmed. Do not allow shrubbery to conceal windows or doors.
3. Remove anything a burglar could climb up on to gain entry or use to knock out a window or door; items such as ladders, tools, tables, and chairs.
4. All exterior doors should be solid, rather than hollow core.
5. Don't leave garage roll down doors open, even while you are home or while you are doing yard work.
6. Use a deadbolt lock to secure your doors. A good deadbolt should have a 1" throw, if you have glass within 40" of the lock a burglar could reach in and unlock the door. A double cylinder lock (this type needs a key on both sides to unlock) should be used if glass is near the lock.
7. If you are going away contact a trusted neighbor or friend to pick up your mail, newspaper and other delivered items.
8. Try not to leave gifts in open view. This is an invitation to burglars.
9. Don't advertise new gifts or purchases. Break up cartons before leaving them at the curb or dispose of them another way the morning of trash pick up.
10. Don't forget to engrave new gifts or purchases with your Drivers license number.
11. Don't open your door to strangers. Be wary of solicitors and salespersons. If a stranger asks to use your telephone, tell them to stay outside, lock the door behind you and make the call for them. Never let a stranger inside your home.
12. Don't give any information about yourself or your neighbor to a stranger.