

A Holiday Message from Dave Salcedo:

Seasons Greetings HHIA members! Yes, its that time of year where we get together with friends, family and loved ones during this joyful time of the year.

However, this time of year is also the time that many thieves and scam artists come out to victimize those unsuspecting souls, yes I mean you and me.

Unfortunately, thieves (criminals) victimize many of us during this time of year. They know that:

- we will have unsecured packages left at our door by delivery services
- that we leave new merchandise in our unsecured or secured vehicles
- that we leave new merchandise in our homes while we are away or at work
- and that we also visit the ATM's or banks and use our credit cards more frequently during this time of year
- and that we carry more cash during this time also, etc.

Do not be an easy target, take easy steps or measures to avoid being a victim during this holiday season and throughout the year! Do not be a statistic! Crime (thefts) go up during the holiday season.

Do you know what to do or will you recognize the below listed **“RED FLAGS?”** Ask yourself these questions and try to answer what you would do, there are many other answers also:

1. Someone knocks on your door at a late hour?
 - a. Do you open the door? Do you turn on all the lights? Do you have signs that state you have video cameras? Do you call the police if you are threatened enough?
2. All your gifts are in the back seat of your car.
 - a. Are they visible? Is your car locked? Can you go home and drop them off securely? Is someone watching you or following you from when you purchased the jewelry for your loved ones? (be discrete when making expensive purchases). Be aware of your surroundings.
3. Kids are selling candy so they won't join a gang, how many boxes should you buy?
 - a. Are they at your door step? At the mall? At the gas station?
4. Your phone rings and it's someone taking donations for families affected by Las Vegas shooting or some other catastrophe, how much should you donate to the cause?
 - a. Don't donate over the phone! Ask for their website, or business location to verify information and that they are a legitimate organization/business.
5. At the gas station or on the highway, an individual comes up to you with this line “I'm a Veteran” or “I have a sick family member,” and “I'm trying to get to.....” and “my car just ran out of gas” how much should I offer them to help?
 - a. Don't, you are only encouraging them to remain there earning income. Additionally, its dangerous for them to be on the highway/freeway.

6. You are given notice that items are being delivered by UPS today to your hours between 4:00 pm & 6:00 pm, you don't worry because you believe the packages will be there when you get home later that night.
 - a. If you can, get someone to take the inside your house, or advise your neighbor to hold them for you. Or you can instruct UPS you will pick them up at one of their drop off/pick up locations.

7. You're at the mall, there's only one spot open to park, you notice there's a van with 4 individuals in it and they look suspicious but you're sure that they are not doing anything illegal, so you just pull in and take your chances.
 - a. Please notify security of the suspicious vehicle. Or Contact police/Sheriff's. Also, don't park there and take note of the license plate of the van.

8. You're going shopping, you only need sixty dollars for the day but you take six hundred out of the ATM just in case.
 - a. Just take what you need or someone else may do it from you. Minimize your loss or being an attractive target.

9. You see a suspicious vehicle parked outside of your home, you don't worry because you believe someone is probably just resting, no need to call the police or sheriff's department.
 - a. Please call the police or Sheriff's Department to check it out. Turn on your front porch lights.

The correct answer here is to not dismiss these events as "it won't happen to me, I live in a nice neighborhood." The reality is that you must think about the "What ifs?" it's about being prepared, answer these to the best of your ability, there are many different answers with these scenarios, and remember the criminals don't know who you are, or who you know, they simply do not care. When they see an opportunity to benefit from you when they can, they will. Lets try and take preventive measures to avoid being a victim.

Please have a safe and wonderful Holiday Season!



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