



UNION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

BEHIND THE STAR

SHERIFF MALCUM J. "JAMIE" PATTON



## Holiday Safety Tips

The Holidays are fast approaching! A time to prepare for celebrations, gift exchanges and let's not forget the unwanted distractions of the hustle and bustle this time of year provides thieves. The opportunity to become invisible allowing them the ability to be non-discrete moving through big crowds without anyone noticing, providing a lawbreaker the ability to pickpocket and shoplift without realizing you have been robbed. "Theft has been on the rise for the past several years, thieves look for opportunities by watching for unlocked cars, open window and unlit parking lots to list a few", says Sheriff Patton. We ask citizens to be vigilant and do your best to try and reduce the opportunity for a criminal to take advantage of you or your loved ones.

Here are some safety tips for you to consider when shopping:

- Try to shop with a friend or relative.
- Do not carry a purse or wallet, if possible. Consider a security travel pouch instead.
- If you do carry a purse or wallet, remember that they are a prime target for criminals. Keep your purse in front of you and do not set your wallet down.
- Remember when you are rushed, you need to stay alert to what is going on around you.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.
- If you carry cash keep it in your front pocket.
- Keep a record of all of your credit card numbers in a safe place at home.
- Keep all your purchases out of plain view. Lock them up in the trunk.

With a **32 percent** increase of online holiday shopping last year, there is an expected **14 percent** increase for 2021. It's even more important to know how to protect your packages.

Here are ways that can help reduce the opportunity for a criminal to steal your package deliveries:

- Track your packages. Carriers have a way for you to track your package. Most carriers can send you an alert or email letting you know when your package has been shipped or that your package has been delivered.

- See if the company you are ordering from will let you schedule your delivery. If this is an option, setup the delivery time for when you or someone else will be home.
- Talk to your neighbors. If you are unable to schedule your delivery time, see if a neighbor will be home and ask if they are willing to keep an eye out for your package delivery.
- Have the package delivered to your place of employment. You may want to check with your employer to be sure that they allow employees to receive personal package deliveries.
- Request a specific location for the package to be left. Some carriers allow you to request a specific location for them to leave the package. Have the carrier leave it where it cannot be easily seen by anyone passing by. Find a location that the carrier can get to, but where no one would think to look.
- Install a Motion-Activated door camera, also known as “Doorbell Cameras.” The doorbell cameras have become increasingly high tech. They can take a picture of someone when they arrive and even communicate with them. The most advanced doorbell cameras can even go as far as unlocking the door for a delivery.

If a package has been stolen, be sure to utilize your security system and pull any video or photos it may have recorded. Call your local Law Enforcement agency to file a report. Try contacting the Carrier to let them know you had a package stolen, question them on their policy for stolen packages. The goal of the Union County Sheriff’s Office is to help you have a safe and Joyful Holiday season. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Union County Sheriff’s Office at 937-645-4100, ext. 4310 to speak with Deputy Rich Crabtree.

Have a Happy and Safe Holidays!