



UNION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
BEHIND THE STAR
SHERIFF MALCUM J. "JAMIE" PATTON



Shopping Safety

Ensuring safety for residents and visitors is the highest priority of the Union County Sheriff's Office. The holiday season is quickly approaching, and many people will begin shopping for their families and friends. Some people will head out to the stores or malls, while some people prefer online shopping. Please keep in mind that thieves are out in person as well as online. "Unfortunately, theft and fraud calls begin to increase during this time of the year". "Thieves look for opportunities such as unlocked cars, open windows, and unlit parking areas as well as sensitive information online", says Sheriff Patton.

Safety tips for you to consider when shopping in person while still in the parking lot:

- Park in well-lit areas of the parking lot.
- Always lock your vehicle doors after leaving your car or entering your car.
- While walking out of the store, keep your keys in your hand to prevent lingering around your car (with packages) while searching for your keys.
- Keep packages out of sight while you are going from store to store. Keep your packages hidden or in your trunk – out of sight.

Safety tips for you to consider when shopping in person:

- Do not leave your purse or any packages unattended. Thieves move around stores as discreetly as possible.
- Avoid carrying a large amount of cash.
- Try to shop with a friend or relative.
- Be mindful of your surroundings. Know where your closest exits are in case of an emergency.
- Document serial numbers (electronics). If an item is stolen, knowing serial numbers will help police.

Safety tips for you to consider when shopping online:

- Ask for a tracking number. Most carriers allow you to track your package right from your cell phone and can send you an alert when your package is 'out for delivery' or sitting on your doorstep.
- Use secure websites. Look for the 'Locked Padlock' symbol near the web browser or 'https' (the "s" means the website is secure).

- Beware of scams. Remember, “If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is”.
- When purchasing an item online, avoid using ‘public WIFI’. This will help prevent hackers from intercepting your personal/bank information.
- Install cameras, doorbell cameras, and/or motion lights on your property. Quality surveillance cameras can help police identify suspects if a package is stolen from your property.
- Have a package delivered to your place of employment if you know you will be at work when it is expected to be delivered. You should check with your employer for permission before doing this.

Remember, if you see something suspicious, say something. Contact the Sheriff’s Office at, 937-645-4110 to report any suspicious activity. If you have a package stolen, contact the Sheriff’s Office to file a theft report as well as the delivery company to file a theft report. Some online purchases/delivery companies offer shipping insurance which you may want to consider.

If you have any questions, as always, please reach out to the Sheriff’s Office for assistance.