

Conway Police Department

Holiday Safety Tips

To help protect you and your property this Holiday Season, the Conway Police Department recommend the following safety tips for our citizens.

Traveling:

When you travel, know where you are going and how to get there and back. Check for construction detours; for longer trips, get a weather forecast.

If traveling out-of-state, most state law enforcement agencies provide road-and-highway information; check to see what conditions they report before leaving. Inform a family member where you will be and when to expect you back; give them your route if they don't know it.

Travel and conduct your business during daylight hours if possible. Lock doors and windows when getting into your car and keep them locked while driving.

If you have access to a cellular telephone, carry or take it.

When driving, keep doors locked and windows rolled up. Maintain at least half a tank of fuel, and keep vehicle in good repair.

If you experience a breakdown, pull as far onto the shoulder as possible and turn your emergency flashers on. If you have a cellular phone, summon assistance from a reputable source or call for law enforcement response.

If a stranger stops, speak to them through a partially rolled-down window, and ask them to go to a phone and call police or a tow service; do not exit your vehicle until a law enforcement officer or tow operator are on scene. On longer trips, be sure you have water, food, and blankets in the vehicle.

If involved in a property-damage collision in an unfamiliar or potentially unsafe location, do not open or exit your vehicle. If you have a cellular telephone, summon law enforcement. If not, acknowledge the accident by hand signal, and motion the other driver to proceed with you to a safe location (where there are other people and light) to exchange information. If unable to proceed, honk the horn to attract attention and ask a passer-by to summon police.

Shopping

When parking, roll up the windows, lock the vehicle, take the keys, and conceal valuables, preferably in the trunk. During hours of darkness, park and walk in lighted areas to the extent possible.

When returning to your vehicle, carry your keys in your hand and be ready to unlock the door and enter as quickly as possible. As you approach your vehicle, scan the area, glance underneath the vehicle, and take a quick look inside before entering.

While out and about, present an alert appearance. Be aware of your surroundings; scan the area from time to time. Avoid concentrating so hard on shopping that you fail to keep track of your surroundings, others near you, or your personal property.

- Wear conservative, comfortable clothing.
- Grip carried items firmly and avoid leaving them unattended.
- Carry minimal cash and valuables, wear minimal jewelry.

Shop with friends or relatives if possible; there IS safety in numbers. As you shop, be alert in crowded places. Among pickpockets' favorites are revolving doors, jammed aisles, elevators, and public transportation stops and vehicles, especially at rush hour. Carry the day's most expensive purchases closest to your body, and don't carry so much you lose the ability to react quickly.

Keep a close eye on your children while shopping. Teach your children to go to a store clerk or security guard if they ever get separated from you in a store/mall, and be sure they know their first and last name so they can tell someone who they are. It's best to keep children under four (4) in a stroller. Children in shopping carts should be properly belted and seated in the child carrier area at all times —never let your child stand in or push a shopping cart. If possible, leave your children with a baby-sitter while you are shopping. For holiday shopping, consider making arrangements with family or friends/neighbors, and take turns baby-sitting.

Return to your vehicle periodically to check on it and reduce the amount you are carrying and must keep track of. Store packages in the trunk or, if your vehicle doesn't have one, out of plain view (*on the floorboard, under a blanket or clothes, etc*). When possible, have purchases delivered instead of taking them with you; many businesses offer free delivery during the holiday shopping season. Ask for an escort to your car if you feel nervous.

Return to the mall or store for assistance if you spot suspicious activity near your vehicle. Stay alert while loading items into or out of the vehicle or arranging cargo stowage. If someone approaches, and you feel threatened, get in and lock up until they leave the area; if they loiter, drive away.

Using debit or credit cards is much safer than carrying a lot of cash. If the vendors you will visit don't take cards, consider obtaining traveler's checks which, unlike cash, can be replaced if lost or stolen. Visit ATM's only at well-lighted and populated locations; visit during daylight hours if possible.

Using the drive-up is usually safer than walking up or into a facility. Remember to scan around

you as you make your withdrawal. Many ATMs now have "fisheye" mirrors mounted above the keyboard to enable you to view the entire surrounding area while conducting business; try to patronize ATMs so-equipped, and use the mirror!