

Holiday Hints

Tips For Keeping Your Home And Family Safe

(NAPSA)—The holiday season is a joyous time of year for millions of Americans across the country. Within the next month, online orders will be made, packages will arrive on doorsteps, and families will leave town to visit relatives or take a holiday vacation. While these may seem innocuous, criminals may see the holiday season as a time to capitalize on gift-giving and holiday vacations.

Daniel Barry, University of Phoenix Las Vegas Campus chair for security & criminal justice programs and a retired Las Vegas Metro police captain, says Americans need to be on higher guard this time of year when criminals can be more active. There are simple ways families can protect themselves and their loved ones, he says.

“While the holidays are a special time for celebration and reflection, it is important to remain alert to the fact that criminals are aware that presents are being purchased and sent and families are leaving their homes unattended,” Barry said. “The best way to ensure your family and your home are secure is by taking precautions to remove any openings for criminals to exploit.”

Barry provides the following security tips for a safe, merry and bright holiday season:

1. Avoid scheduling package deliveries when you're out of town. Going away for the holidays means you and your home are more vulnerable to theft, particularly if packages start piling up on your doorstep. If you're planning to be away, consider having your packages delivered to a nearby retail store, P.O. box or friend's house. Make sure family members know not to send presents when you're not home.

2. Sign up for tracking numbers, package notifications and delivery signatures. Tracking numbers and text message or e-mail delivery notifications can help you stay up-to-date on when your packages will arrive so you'll know if something has happened to them. Similarly, opting to require signatures on your packages will ensure that pack-



Protect your presents with a few extra precautions at holiday time.

ages aren't delivered unless someone is home.

3. Set holiday lights on a timer. If you're heading out for a long night of holiday parties, protect your home from possible invasion by creating the appearance that someone is still there. Have your holiday lights on a timer and keep a TV on in your living room. If your family isn't keen on holiday decorations, consider putting lamps near windows on timers instead.

4. Put a video security system on your holiday wish list. Video security systems are the best option for defending your home while you're away or even inside. Ask your friends and family to consider gifting you the latest system, but be sure to suggest one with a corresponding mobile app.

5. Do not place empty boxes or packaging on the curb or outside your home. This is an unknowing way of advertising to thieves that you have a new computer, television or gaming station in your home. Always destroy your boxes and place in a garbage bag for pickup.

If you're interested in taking the next step to learn more about a criminal justice degree, University of Phoenix offers degrees and certificates that focus on security, public administration and criminal justice that teach the necessary hard and soft skills to pursue a career in criminal justice. Students learn how to make a difference in their communities, protect people and contribute to improving society.