TIS THE SEASON TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM THEFT

The holidays are just around the corner and perhaps you’re still searching for the perfect gift. Before you head to the mall or online, review these reminders about protecting yourself against theft during this time of year.

TAKE IT WITH YOU
*When running into a store, restaurant or holiday party, it may be tempting to leave a purse or wallet in the car. Remember, there’s no place in your car, including your trunk, where you can hide something of value that a thief hasn’t already thought to look.

*After paying with a credit or debit card, take your receipt. Sometimes receipts are issued that include your entire account number (think craft and gift shows) — information an identity thief can use to damage your finances.

*Don’t tempt a thief by leaving purchases in the car. If someone thinks you’ve purchased something of value and sees it unattended in your car, they may decide to help themselves to it. You could be out the merchandise and have to deal with damage to your car.

MONITOR YOUR PERSONAL SPACE
When using an ATM, make sure no one is standing close enough to “shoulder surf” or watch you enter your PIN number. Also, make sure someone hasn’t tampered with the machine by adding an additional card reader or video camera. A small video camera (disguised as a brochure holder on the machine) can record your PIN number while an added card reader records the information contained on the magnetic strip of your card.

SHOPPING ONLINE TIPS
If you shop online, buy from reputable businesses, make sure you’re on a secure web site (there should be a lock on the screen and the URL will read https), and make sure delivered packages require a signature and aren’t left unattended on your porch.

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