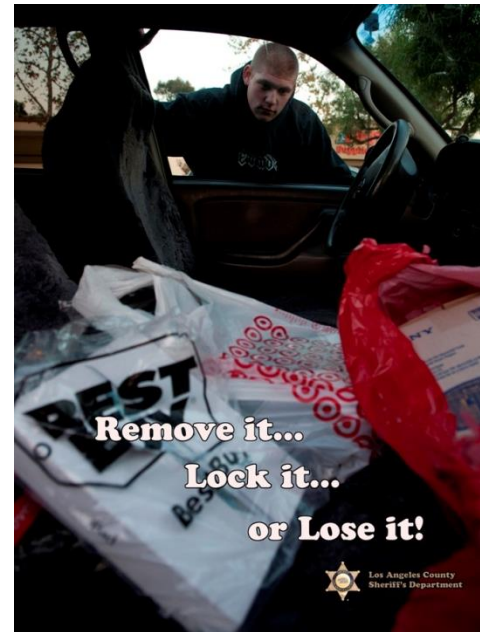


## Keep Holiday Shopping Enjoyable: Shopping Safety Tips

It's that time of year again. With the holidays rapidly approaching, shoppers will once again be out in force. As we use our credit cards, debit cards, and checks, please be aware that there is a chance you can also become a victim of fraud.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department would like to advise you of some safety tips for this holiday season to reduce the chances of becoming such a victim.

1. Storing property in vehicle: Purchased items left in plain view inside your vehicle is an invitation for someone to break into it. Remember, it is only glass that separates someone from your items. If you must leave items in your car, put them in the trunk. If this is not possible, place items out of view and cover them up.
2. Credit Cards: when using your credit card, be sure that you have signed the card on the back side prior to using it. Also, when shopping, take only the cards you intend on using. Should you lose your purse/wallet, it becomes easier to identify which cards are missing.
3. Debit Cards: Protect your PIN from view when entering it at a point of sale terminal. When given the option, use the debit card as credit and sign for your purchases.
4. Checks: keep good records when using checks as a form of payment. Sign only in the presence of the cashier. Do not pre-sign them in the event your checks get lost or stolen.
5. Check your accounts online: Always check your bank and credit card balances and verify your purchases. Keeping up with your accounts will give you the opportunity to identify suspicious purchases, thereby stopping any fraud immediately.
6. Receipts: keep good records of your receipts to verify your purchases.
7. Purses in shopping carts: don't leave your purse unattended in the shopping cart as you are viewing items on display. Also consider leaving your purse closed or zipped up to prevent someone from reaching in.
8. Purses with shoulder straps: keep in mind as you walk through any parking lot that purses with shoulder straps can be easily grabbed by passing persons or occupants in vehicles, especially if your hands are full carrying bagged items. When walking, keep that shouldered purse away from the side where vehicles pass, making it more difficult for someone to grab it.
9. Buddy system: when shopping, it is always better to do it with a friend. There is safety in numbers.
10. Report suspicious activity: Be alert of your surroundings. Notice anyone suspicious and report them to security (if the location has it) or the police.
11. Security Escorts: Many stores have security that can provide you with an escort to your vehicle if you request it.



The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department wishes that you have a safe and enjoyable holiday season.