



Watch Works

Charles County
Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Rex W. Coffey
November 2013

Holiday Shopping Safety

It's the time of year that we are busy buying gifts, decorations and holiday cheer. Some love the excitement of holiday shopping while others would rather shop on line and have it delivered. If you venture out here are a few safety rules to follow.

- Always lock your car and close the windows, even if you're only gone a few moments. When possible, lock all merchandise or packages in the trunk of your car. Load your packages before departing, not at the next destination.
- Shop with at least one partner. Have your car or house key in your hand as you approach the door.
- Stay alert to your surroundings and the people around you. Look inside your car and around it as you approach.
- Be extra careful with

purses and wallets. Carry a purse under your arm or under your coat. Keep wallets in an inside pocket.

- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.
- Avoid street vendors. Many times they are selling stolen or unlicensed merchandise.
- Plan your trips. Instead of one big shopping trip, try several small ones. This will cut down on the amount of money you carry, the packages you'll be encumbered with, and it will make your shopping less stressful.
- Walk everywhere with a sense of purpose - show you are calm, confident and know where you are going.
- Park in well-lighted areas that will be well-lighted when you return.
- If you write checks, use only the necessary in-

formation, name, address, phone number. Never give your social security number.

- Safeguard your credit cards and checks as you do cash. Do not leave them in jacket pockets or sitting out in restaurants, stores or hotel rooms.
- Keep your purse or wallet on you. Shoulder straps should cross your body, not dangle from your shoulder. Do not lay them in a shopping basket.
- Keep your receipts and reconcile your statements. Promptly report any discrepancies to the issuer.

ABOVE ALL, IF YOU ARE VICTIMIZED, REPORT IT TO POLICE IMMEDIATELY.

Dates to Remember

November 3: Daylight Saving Time ends.

November 11: Veterans Day

November 28: Thanksgiving Day



Have you heard?

Effective October 1, 2013, Maryland has a primary seat belt law for front seat occupants AND a secondary seat belt law for back seat occupants. Tickets can be issued to drivers and front

seat passengers even if no other violation is observed. Also effective October 1, 2013, Maryland's cell phone law now prohibits a driver from using a cell phone while a motor vehicle is in

motion. Drivers will receive a fine of up to :
\$75— first offense
\$125— second offense
\$175—third & subsequent offense



Traveling for the Holidays?

When you travel, plan ahead!

If traveling by vehicle, know where you are going and how to get there and back. Obtain a map or download the latest available GPS data. Check for construction detours; for longer trips, get a weather forecast.

If traveling out-of-state:

Most states and/or state law enforcement agencies provide road-and-highway information either on-line or at a 1-800 number. Check to see what conditions they report before leaving. Visit the Federal Highway Administration's related webpage.....National Traffic and Road Closure Information" www.fhwa.dot.gov/trafficinfo/index.htm....for national, regional, and state-by-state links regarding traffic, closures, and other conditions.

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.

Carry a cell phone, but don't use it while driving; this is now unlawful in many states. If possible, know the emergency cell codes for the area you're in.

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

If planning a "road trip" over the holidays, have your vehicle serviced and checked out sufficiently far ahead to allow for repairs if needed. Don't forget to have the mechanic check your spare tire and all fluid levels along with the other preventive maintenance procedures.

Consider keeping a "breakdown kit" in your vehicle at all times. Breakdown kits may be purchased from a variety of sources, or you can assemble your own at any auto parts or hardware store using a commercial version as a guideline.

Minimally, a kit should include:

- A thermal blanket/bag and a gallon water.
- A "HELP" sign/flag and flares/reflectors.
- A flashlight.
- Duct tape.

Also consider carrying:

- Jumper cables, tire gauge, and work gloves.
- A few hand tools (pliers, screwdrivers, Allen wrenches).
- Some rope and at least one bungee cord.
- Towels and a roll of toilet paper (in a plastic bag).
- A small 12 volt tire-inflator.
- A new empty one-gallon gas can.

- A cheap/disposable rain coat/poncho.

All these items can fit in a small or medium size gym/duffle bag or a box and kept in your vehicle's trunk or back seat floorboard. Keep it updated but never remove it from your vehicle.

You should also have a basic first aid kit in your vehicle at all times.

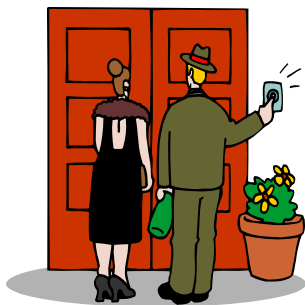
Know how to access your spare tire and jack.

Vehicle owners should also consider obtaining towing insurance, either as a rider on their automobile insurance or by joining an automobile club or other provider. Be prepared!

If you feel yourself getting tired, pull over at a safe location where there are other people and light and take a break. Avoid the "tunnel vision" which often occurs during monotonous highway driving as you focus on immediately ahead or where your headlights reach.

Never pick up hitchhikers (your parents were right!)

The single-most essential safety tip is to devote your full time and attention to driving!





A word from your Community Organizer: Connie Gray 301-932-3080

Why do the holidays seem to arrive so fast? I hope everyone can take the time to enjoy family and loved ones this sea-

son. Please remember those less fortunate and do what you can to make their holidays enjoyable. As the weather grows cold, check

on your neighbors, especially the elderly and see if they need your help with anything. I hope your celebrations are wonderful!



Emergency Kit

It's always good to be prepared for an emergency. Whether man made or natural, it can't hurt to be ready.

Food and Water:

- Three-day supply of water (1 gallon daily for each family member).
- Three-day supply of non-perishable food.
- Manual can opener and utensils.
- Camp stove with fuel or other non-electric cooking device.
- Paper or plastic plates and bowls.

Communication Needs:

- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio and extra batteries.
- Copy of family disaster plan and important phone numbers.
- Cell phone, extra battery, charger.
- Prepaid phone card.
- Whistle to signal for help.

First Aid:

- Waterless hand clean-

er.

- Antibiotic ointment.
- Adhesive bandages in assorted sizes.
- Eyewash solution.
- Pain relievers for adults and children.
- Sterile Dressings.
- Thermometer.
- Insect repellent.
- Hygiene products, such as soap and toothpaste.
- Tweezers.
- Petroleum jelly or other lubricant.

Copies of Important Documents:

- Licenses, passports, birth certificates, Social Security cards.
- Homeowners, renters, auto, life and medical insurance policy information.
- Bank account and credit card information.
- Inventory lists, photos or disk of possessions.

Special Needs:

- Infant formula, baby food, diapers and other supplies.

- Prescription medications and copies of prescriptions.
- Eyeglasses, contacts, contact solution.
- Items for elderly family members.

Pet Needs:

- Three-day supply of food and water.
- Leash and collar with identification and date of vaccination.

Other Basics:

- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- Fire Extinguisher.
- Sanitation supplies such as moist towelettes, bleach.
- Blanket.
- Cash and coins.
- Plastic garbage bags.

Keep bleach and other sanitary and hygiene products away from food products. Pack food products in separate container. Have containers easy to get to and ready to go if you need to evacuate.





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