Holiday Safety Tips—

We all know what time it is; the time when everyone gets crazy busy, anticipating the holiday season. Our friends at the Minnesota Crime Prevention Association have kindly put together a holiday safety check list in hopes of preventing anyone out enjoying the holiday season from being “Scrogged”.

If You’re Traveling...
- Set an automatic timer for your lights.
- Ask your neighbor to watch your home, shovel the walks, pick up newspapers, collect mail, and park in the driveway from time to time to make the house look lived in.
- Be sure to keep any gifts that may be left in the house out of sight while you’re gone.

If You’re Out for the Evening...
- Turn on lights and a radio or television so that it appears that someone is home.
- Lock all doors and windows while you’re out, even if just a few minutes.
- Do not place packages or gifts near windows or in other high-visibility sites.

If You’re Shopping...
- Don’t let your guard down just because you are rushing.
- Stay alert and be aware of everything around you at all times. Report suspicious activity by calling 911. The police need your eyes and ears to assist them.
- Park in well-lighted spaces and as close to the store as possible, lock your car doors, and hide packages in the trunk or under the seat. Be certain to hide items each time you return to the car.
- Don’t carry large amounts of cash, pay with a check or credit card if possible. Tell the clerk to check your I.D. if they do not ask for it. Don’t discard your receipts until you get home. Thieves like to collect receipts and use them to return items that were stolen from stores.
- Carry your purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps. Put a wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket. Don’t leave your purse in a cart and walk away. **Fanny packs are great for shopping!!
- If you take your children shopping, teach them to go to a police officer or a store security guard if they get separated or lost.

If You’re at Home...
- Turn on outside lights to deter burglars.
- Report any suspicious behavior to the police or local community watch groups.
- Make sure your homeowner’s (or renters) insurance is up-to-date and everything is inventoried properly. Operation I.D. is a great way to inventory your home.
- Get to know your neighbors...join or start your own neighborhood watch today. For more information contact your local law enforcement agency.

If a Stranger comes to the Door...
- Stay alert to suspicious-looking couriers delivering packages to you or your neighbors.
- Many con artists take advantage of holiday generosity by going door-to-door. Ask for identification and get specifics to how and where the donations will be spent/used.
- If you feel uncomfortable, just say “no thank you” and shut the door.

Pre-Holiday Overindulgence?

This past weekend, our officers were extraordinarily busy with cases involving alcohol related impaired drivers and we hope this is not indicative of the upcoming holiday season. The telling statistics show that our officers arrested nine individuals for drunk driving related offenses over the weekend; the average alcohol content in these cases was .138, or almost twice the legal limit to drive. The holidays are always a time to celebrate, but celebrations can become dangerous situations when alcohol is involved. How alcohol impacts each person can be affected by weight and gender and by what a person has had to eat and how fast the alcohol is ingested. Let’s work together to keep everyone safe this holiday season; if you are celebrating and alcohol is involved, it is safest to designate a sober driver.

Seeking Assistance—

One again, one of our parks has been victimized by senseless vandalism. On November 15th, a fire was set in the men’s restroom in the chalet in Morehouse Park. At this point, we have not identified any suspects in this case. Anyone with information related to this case may contact Detective Sergeant Tim Hassing at 507-774-7207.