AT HOME

• Lock your doors and windows if you are going out, no matter how short a period of time you will be gone.
• Keep gifts away from areas, such as windows, where they can be seen by outside travelers.
• Use a peep-hole when someone comes to your door. Never let anyone into your home that you do not know.
• When returning to your home from an outing, do not go in if there are signs that someone has forced entry while you were away. Go to a neighbor’s house and call the police immediately.
• If you shop online and have packages shipped to your home, always make sure someone is there to receive them or ship them to you work address.

TRAVELING

Take precautions to prevent your home from looking vacant:
• Stop your mail or newspaper service.
• Have your walks shoveled.
• Get an electric timer for your lights.
• Call the police department and ask for vacation patrol checks. It will alert officers there should not be activity at your home while you are gone.
• If you are traveling in a car, know your route of travel; check the road conditions before you leave.

OUT AND ABOUT

• Avoid carrying large amounts of cash or other valuables.
• Do not leave packages unattended in your car unless locked in the trunk.
• When carrying a purse, hold it close to your body. Always carry a wallet in an inside coat or front pant pocket, never a back pant pocket.

HOLIDAY SAFETY

• Stay in well-lit areas and on heavily traveled streets. Avoid routes that take you through dark, vacant areas.
• When shopping, try to go with family or friends.
• If shopping with your children, make sure that they know who to go to in case they get lost: a store clerk, security guard or police officer.
• Always trust your instincts. If people or locations are making you uneasy, leave or stay away.
• Use a debit or credit card instead of cash, if possible—it is easier to carry and replace if lost or stolen.
• If possible, use the ATM during the day. Be ready with card in hand as you approach the machine, do not linger.

DECORATING

• When stringing lights, make sure that the cords are in good condition.
• Do not overload outlets; it is a good practice to stick to three sets of lights per extension cord.
• Test lights before hanging and unplug before doing maintenance on them.
• Keep candles in non-combustible and sturdy containers and, when burning, out of children’s reach. Ensure wax drips are contained.
• Clean fireplaces annually. Open the damper or flue and make sure that a screen or door is securely in place while the fire is burning.
• Extinguish candles and fireplaces and unplug lights before leaving.

DONATING TO CHARITIES

• Before donating make sure that you know about the charity.
• If solicited by an organization, ask for literature on them before you donate.
• If solicited by an individual, offer food or other non-monetary donations.