

## Mall and Parking Lot Holiday Crime Prevention

The traditional holiday shopping season is in full swing and the Inglewood Police Department and local shopping centers have beefed up their security efforts. In an effort to reduce crime, the Inglewood Police Department has increased deployment during the holiday period at the local shopping centers, as well as DUI checkpoints throughout the City.

The Inglewood Police Department also wants to alert shoppers to be aware of the thieves roaming around inside malls, shopping centers and parking lots preying on visible items they can easily get their hands on.

One of the biggest problems at malls and shopping centers are shoppers leaving valuables in plain sight in parked cars. Always be aware and alert of your surroundings. Most shoppers are consumed by their thoughts and shopping. Watch shoppers as they approach their cars fumbling for their keys. They will turn their backs and attention completely away from those nearby to load shopping bags in the car and/or get children and infants installed inside the vehicle. Most shopping center and parking lot crimes and carjacking occur precisely at this point. The following are helpful car theft and shopping crime prevention tips:

- Always lock your vehicles and close your windows tightly.
- Use a steering column locking device.
- Do not leave your laptop in your vehicle. IPOD's and IPOD docking stations are a prime target.
- Always use your vehicle's alarm system. Display an alarm decal near the door handle.
- Park your vehicle as close to a well-lit area as possible.
- Approach your vehicle with keys in hand. As you approach your vehicle, look under, around and inside your vehicle.
- Do not leave garage remotes in your vehicle.
- If you see any suspicious activity near any vehicle, call the police.
- Check on your vehicle periodically.
- If you park in a fee garage, always take the pay-ticket with you. It's the thief's ticket out of the garage, too.
- If you use valet parking, leave just the **ignition key** with the attendant. Make sure no identifying information is attached to it. Leave your registration/insurance information in a locked and secured glove box. Do the same when you take your car for repairs. Does the ignition key open that too? If it does, take the information with you.
- Make sure you have copies of all vehicle and insurance information and keep in a secured place at home.
- Never leave your car running and unattended, even to dash into a business.
- Plan when to go (daylight hours) and where to park. For example, try not to park next to a large enclosed van). Arrange not to shop alone, if possible.
- Scan the area before you exit and enter your vehicle.

