



Do the holidays have you jumping through hoops?  
 Don't let CRIME complicate matters!  
 Try our

## HOLIDAY PERSONAL SAFETY & SECURITY TIPS

**From Chief Arbogast, the officers and staff of Medina Township Police Department wish you a safe holiday season. We hope these tips may help you to prevent your holidays from becoming complicated.**

**When you travel**, know where you are going and how to get there and back. **Check for construction detours**; for longer trips, get a weather forecast.

**If traveling out-of-state**, most state law enforcement agencies provide road-and-highway information; **check** to see what conditions they report before leaving. 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. Lock doors and windows when getting into your car and keep them locked while driving.**



**If you have access to a cellular telephone, carry or take it.**

If possible, know the emergency cell codes for the area you're in.

This may help find emergency numbers

### EXPANDED STATE-BY-STATE LISTINGS

Alabama	Cellphone-only: *HP (star 47)
Alaska	911
Arizona	911
Arkansas	911 or Cellphone-only: *55 (star 55)
California	911
Colorado	911 or Cellphone-only: *CSP (star 277) or *DUI (star 384) —to report DUIs
Connecticut	911 or (800-443-6817)
Delaware	911
Florida	911 or 800-525-5555 or Cellphone-only: *FHP (star 347)

Georgia	911 or <i>Cellphone-only: *GSP (star 477)</i>
Hawaii	911
Idaho	911 or 800-233-1212 or <i>Cellphone-only: *ISP (star 477)</i>
Illinois	911 or <i>Cellphone-only: *999 (star 999)</i>
Indiana	911
Iowa	911 or 800-555-HELP (800-555-4357)
Kansas	911 (Statewide) or <i>Cellphone-only:</i> *HP (star 47) for Salina, KS *KTA (*482) —Kansas Turnpike and for Wichita, KS
Kentucky	911 or 800-222-5555
Louisiana	911 or <i>Cellphone-only: *LHP (star 547)</i> Lake Ponchartrain Causeway: *27 (star 27 — <i>cellphone-only</i> ) or 504-893-6250
Maine	911 or <i>Cellphone-only: *SP (star 77)</i>
Maryland	911 or <i>Cellphone-only: #SP (pound 77)</i>
Massachusetts	Cellphones: *MSP (star 677) —in the 413 areacode *SP (star 77) —outside the 413 areacode
Michigan	911
Minnesota	911
Mississippi	Cellphone only: *HP (star 47)
Missouri	<i>Cellphone-only: *55 (star 55) or</i> 800-525-5555
Montana	911 (emergency only) or 800-525-5555 (non-emergency)
Nebraska	911 or 800-525-5555 or <i>Cellphone-only: *55 (star 55)</i>
Nevada	911 or <i>Cellphone-only: *NHP (star 647)</i>
New Hampshire	911 or 800-622-2394 or <i>Cellphone-only: *SP (star 77)</i>
New Jersey	911 or <i>Cellphone-only: #77 (pound 77 —to report</i> <i>aggressive driving)</i>
New Mexico	911 or 505-827-9301
New York	911
North Carolina	Cellphone only: *HP (star 47) or 800-662-7956
North Dakota	911
Ohio	911 or 800-525-5555 (OHP) or 800-877-7PATROL (Ohio only, to report

	<i>non-emergency safety concerns) or 800-GRAB-DUI (to report erratic driving)</i>
Oklahoma	<i>Cellphone-only *55 (star 55)</i>
Oregon	911
Pennsylvania	911 or <i>Cellphone-only: *11 (star 11)—on turnpikes</i>
Rhode Island	911 or <i>Cellphone-only: *SP (star 77) or 401-444-1069</i>
South Carolina	Cellphone only: <i>*HP (star 47)</i>
South Dakota	911
Tennessee	<i>Cellphone-only: *THP (star 847) or 615-741-2060</i>
Texas	911 or 800-525-5555 or <i>Cellphone-only: *DPS (star 377)</i>
Utah	911 or <i>Cellphone-only: *11 (star 11)</i>
Vermont	911 or DWI Hotline: 800-GETADWI and <i>*DWI (star 394 —cellphone-only)</i>
Virginia	911 or <i>Cellphone-only: #SP (pound 77)</i>
U.S. Virgin Islands	911
Washington	911
West Virginia	<i>Cellphone-only: *SP (star 77)</i>
Wisconsin	911
Wyoming	Cellphone only: <i>#HELP (pound 4357) or 800-442-9090</i>
<b>When in doubt:</b>	<b>0 (zero)</b> —Operator assistance <b>411</b> —local directory assistance <b>(area code) + 555-1212</b> —non-local directory assistance

**When driving, keep doors locked and windows rolled up. 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 spare fuses and 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 "breakdown kit" should include:**

- ☒ a thermal blanket/bag and a gallon of water
- ☒ a "HELP" sign/flag and flares/reflectors
- ☒ a flashlight (*check batteries semi-annually*)
- ☒ duct tape

**Also consider carrying:**

- ☒ a set of jumper cables, a 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
- ☒ an empty (*new, never used*) one-gallon gas can
- ☒ change for a payphone and a pair of comfortable shoes
- ☒ a cheap/disposable rain coat/suit/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, back-seat floorboard, or other storage area in the vehicle. Keep it updated, but **never remove it** from your vehicle.

In addition to your basic "breakdown kit" you should also have a **basic first aid kit** in your vehicle at all times.

Also consider purchasing and mounting a small ABC-rated **portable fire extinguisher** in your vehicle. Buy one with a "mount" designed for use in vehicles. Portable fire extinguishers should be **securely "mounted"** in the vehicle to prevent rolling and damage. The extinguisher should be visible and easy to reach. Mount the bracket on a strong, stable surface. It can be mounted in any sloping, vertical or horizontal position.



**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 policy (*such riders are usually very inexpensive for excellent coverage*) or by joining an automobile club or other provider. Be prepared!



Follow the timeless, savvy advice of OUPD Sergeant M. Wayne Smith (Ret), "It doesn't cost any more to keep the **top** quarter of your tank filled than it does to keep the **bottom** quarter filled." Even if you're pressed for time, take time to fill up the tank. Making a habit of checking your fuel gauge whenever you start driving, and routinely "topping off" your tank, can prevent unexpected, untimely and dangerous roadside emergency situations.

**If you experience a breakdown**, pull as far onto the shoulder as possible and turn your emergency flashers on. If you have a cellular phone, summon assistance from a reputable source or call for law enforcement response. Otherwise, raise your hood or tie a streamer to your antenna, and await assistance inside your locked vehicle.

If a stranger stops, speak to them through a partially rolled-down window, and ask them to go to a phone and call police or a tow service; do not exit your vehicle until a law enforcement officer or tow operator are on scene. On longer trips, be sure you have water, food, and blankets in the vehicle.



**If involved in a property-damage collision** in an unfamiliar or potentially unsafe location, do not open or exit your vehicle. If you have a cellular telephone, summon law enforcement. If not, acknowledge the accident by hand signal, and motion the other driver to proceed with you to a safe location (where there are other people and light) to exchange information. If unable to proceed, honk the horn to attract attention and ask a passer-by to summon police.



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**Before your trip** — Consider leaving a copy of your travel itinerary with a trusted family friend or relative (plus a driving route map or flight/bus/train trip info).

Also handy when you're "away" from home: You can download/print our "[Lost/Stolen Wallet Inventory & Emergency Checklist](#)" to record key information for a house-sitter, friend/neighbor, or relative.



**If signaled to stop by any vehicle** other than a clearly marked law enforcement unit, acknowledge the signal, and wave the driver to follow you to a safe location (where there are other people and light). Drive within the speed limit and take the shortest possible route to the nearest safe place. If you have a cellular phone, dial 9-1-1, tell the call-taker you are being followed by an unmarked vehicle attempting to stop you, and ask them to send a marked law enforcement vehicle to your location.

**When parking**, roll up the windows, lock the vehicle, take the keys, insure your valuables are concealed, preferably in the trunk. During hours of darkness, park and walk in lighted areas to the extent possible.

If you must leave valuable items in your car while out and about, place items out of sight before reaching your destination or move them inconspicuously. This includes packages, backpacks, gym bags, GPS units, MP3 players, and so

forth. Someone may be watching when you put items under/behind seat or throw something over them. An opportunistic thief is on the lookout for "trunk-packing", and can break into your car the minute you're out of sight.

One reason SUVs and pickups are common auto-burglary targets is because they don't have a "trunk" to hold valuables — the driver/passenger generally just "hides" their valuables "out of sight". The thieves know this, and do check glove compartments, behind seats, and under seats. It only takes a few seconds to check all the "usual" hiding places.

Unobtrusively locking everything valuable "in the trunk" (*if you have one*) may be difficult when you're combining errands at multiple destinations. Certainly avoid leaving packages or shopping bags **visible** in your car — lock them in the trunk out of sight if you have to leave packages in your car unattended.

Plan your shopping/errands so that you don't load your trunk until you are **ready to drive to another destination**. Load your trunk when you **leave** a location — never open a trunk, fill it full of valuables, close it, and then just walk away to do more shopping or other errands.

For more vehicle-related tips see our [Auto-Burglary Prevention Tips](#) webpage.

**When returning to your vehicle**, carry your keys in your hand and be ready to unlock the door and enter as quickly as possible. As you approach your vehicle, scan the area, glance underneath the vehicle, and take a quick look inside before entering.

**While out and about, present an alert appearance.**

Be aware of your surroundings; scan the area from time to time. Avoid concentrating so hard on shopping that you fail to keep track of your surroundings, others near you, or your personal property.

- Wear conservative, comfortable clothing.
- Grip carried items firmly and avoid leaving them unattended.
- Carry minimal cash and valuables, wear minimal jewelry.



**Shop with friends or relatives if possible; there IS safety in numbers.**

As you shop, be alert in crowded places. Among pickpockets' favorites are revolving doors, jammed aisles, elevators, and public transportation stops and vehicles, especially at rush hour. Carry the day's most expensive purchases closest to your body, and don't carry so much you lose the ability to react quickly.

If possible, leave your children with a baby-sitter while you are shopping. For holiday shopping, consider making arrangements with family or friends/neighbors, and take turns baby-sitting. If you take your children with you, **keep a close eye on them while shopping**.

Teach your children to go to a store clerk or security guard if they ever get separated from you in a store/mall, and be sure they know their first and last name so they can tell someone who they are. It's best to keep children under four (4) in a stroller. Children in shopping carts should be properly belted and seated in the child carrier area at all times —never let your child stand in or push a shopping cart.

Return to your vehicle periodically to check on it and reduce the amount you are carrying and must keep track of. Store packages in the trunk or, if your vehicle doesn't have one, out of plain view (*on the floorboard, under a blanket or clothes, etc*). When possible, have purchases delivered instead of taking them with you; many businesses offer free delivery during the holiday shopping season. Ask for an escort to your car if you feel nervous.

Return to the mall or store for assistance if you spot suspicious activity near your vehicle. Stay alert while loading items into or out of the vehicle or arranging cargo stowage. If someone approaches, and you feel threatened, get in and lock up until they leave the area; if they loiter, drive away.

**Using debit or credit cards is much safer than carrying a lot of cash.** If the vendors you will visit don't take cards, consider obtaining traveler's checks which, unlike cash, can be replaced if lost or stolen. Visit ATM's only at well-lighted and populated locations; visit during daylight hours if possible.

Using the drive-up is usually safer than walking up or into a facility. Remember to scan around you as you make your withdrawal. Many ATMs now have "fisheye" mirrors mounted above the keyboard to enable you to view the entire surrounding area while conducting business; try to patronize ATMs so-equipped, and use the mirror!



**If anyone is loitering, or you don't like their looks, go to another ATM.** Stand such that those behind you cannot see your PIN as you enter it; your PIN should NEVER be written down on or carried with your ATM card.

**Be observant.** Avoid dark areas, short-cuts, cul-de-sacs, and suspicious persons. Stay near light and people.

**Be prepared to flee potential problems.** If apprehensive about any location for any reason, leave. Consider carrying a whistle. Weapons are not recommended, and may be unlawful.

#### **If followed — On Foot:**

1. Cross the street
2. Vary your pace
3. Change direction



#### **By Vehicle**

1. Execute several right turns to verify
2. Get and stay on arterial streets
3. Note and record:
  - o license plate number
  - o description of vehicle and occupant(s)

If followed by a vehicle while you are on foot, turn and walk the "wrong way" onto a One-Way Street, if possible. If follower persists, go to an occupied and lighted location (*convenience store, fire station, police station*) and summon police.

**Confine your charitable giving to reputable established organizations, preferably those with a local branch.**

If solicited by an individual for personal charity, don't give cash; offer to buy the individual food or drink or refer them to local assistance resources.

If solicited for an unfamiliar organized charity, ask for literature so you can make an informed decision about giving; any reputable organization will be glad to provide material or a website address where you can check them out.

To avoid telephone solicitation to the extent possible, sign up for the "[National Do-Not Call List](#)". If solicited by telephone despite being on the list, simply hang up — it's your phone. If you choose to speak to the solicitor, do not give out credit card numbers or personal information not listed in the telephone directory, and don't allow the organization to come to your home until you are certain of their reliability. Instead, ask them to send you information so you can make an informed decision and mail in your donation.



With the exception of local organizations, door-to-door sales are often fraudulent, and should be viewed with skepticism. If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is.

Under consumer protection laws, you have a right to written information about any offer, and the right to cancel any order within three days should you reconsider your decision.

Make sure you obtain enough information to enable you to re-contact the vendor or his/her office in the event you have questions or change your mind. If you don't want to

be bothered by door-to-door solicitors, most locations have a law that solicitors must avoid homes which display a "NO SOLICITORS" sign; bear in mind this usually doesn't apply to religious proselytizing, charitable organizations or political workers.

For further information about consumer protection laws, contact your State Attorney General's Office. **Also**, visit our nationally acclaimed safety presentation on [Identity Theft and Fraud](#) which has a wealth of information on shopping safety, both online and off.

**Promptly report suspicious persons, vehicles, and crimes to the local law enforcement agency.**







## Traveling by air?

—Visit the [Transportation Security Administration's website](#) and check out these pages...

- ["Air Travel — For Travelers..."](#)
- [Prohibited Items](#)
- [Airport/Date/Time-Specific Security Checkpoint Wait Times](#)

### Did you know? —

Locking Your Checked Baggage: In some cases **screeners** will have to **open** your baggage as part of the screening process.

If your bag is unlocked then Transportation Security Administration (TSA) screeners will simply open and screen the baggage.

**However**, if you decide to **lock** your checked baggage, and TSA cannot open your checked baggage through other means, then **the locks may have to be broken**.

TSA is not liable for damage caused to locked bags that must be opened for security purposes.

TSA suggests that you help prevent the need to break your locks by using a [TSA recognized locking mechanism](#). These ["special" locks](#) can be opened by TSA using tools provided by the luggage industry.

For more information, see the TSA webpage, ["TSA Recognized Baggage Locks"](#).

And, from the  
FAA's Air Traffic Control System Command Center,

#### [Current Flight Delay Information](#)

*(This page/information automatically refreshes every 60 seconds)*

And,  
from the Department of Transportation's  
"Aviation Consumer Protection Division"—

#### [Travel Tips & Publications](#)