This Holiday Season Think Safety

This holiday season, don't let the spirit of giving lull you into giving burglars and thieves a chance to do their dirty work. Crooks love the holidays as much as everyone else, but chiefly because it's an opportune time for crime. Here are some tips on how to celebrate safely this holiday season:

AT HOME
Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave your apartment or home. Don't display holiday gifts where they can be seen from a window or doorway.

If you go out for the evening, turn on lights and a radio or television so the house or apartment appears to be occupied.

Immediately after the holidays, mark new gifts with an identification number and record new serial numbers. The UTSA Police Department can engrave your items for free.

Use only fire resistant ornaments on a holiday tree and make sure electric lights are in good working order.

Avoid leaving boxes from purchases (especially TVs, computers, etc.) out on the curb for trash pickup.

Never connect more than one extension cord together for holiday lights to avoid fire hazards.

IF YOU'RE SHOPPING
Stay alert and be aware of what's going on around you.

Avoid carrying large amounts of cash; pay with a check or credit card whenever possible.

Avoid overloading yourself with packages. It is important to have clear visibility and freedom of motion to avoid mishaps.

Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason. At this time of year, "con-artists" may try various methods of distracting you with the intention of taking your money or belongings.

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.

Avoid over serving and have a plan in case some guests drink too much. Designate someone that is not drinking to take people home or be sure to clean off that old air mattress in the closet.

Obey the law! The legal drinking age in Texas is 21 and furnishing alcohol to a minor is an arrestable offense! Watch what you drink and know your limits. A good rule is 0-1-3: 0 drinks if you're driving or underage, 1 drink per hour, no more than 3 drinks in an evening.

Last but not least, don't let holiday stress get the best of your holiday spirit. Make time to get together with family, friends, and neighbors. And think about reaching out in the spirit of the season and helping someone who is less fortunate or lonely. Do your part to make the holidays a safe and happy time for everybody—except criminals.

References: National Crime Prevention Council, LAPD Crime Prevention Section, Parents.com & www.thecenter.ucla.edu/
UTSA Awarded First Place for National Night Out 2013

Thanks to the combined efforts of Student Life, Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards, Student Health and Wellness, Counseling Services, the UTSA bookstore and various other partners UTSA is the proud recipient of 1st Place award for National Night Out (NNO) in its respective category. The UTSA Police Department is honored to host the event yet not able to achieve the success it has been able to achieve, without the various collaborate partners.

The students and staff who take time to participate, volunteer and get involved are all vital in the success we have had building the UTSA’S NNO event. The event has blossomed from a hand full of students in the housing areas in 2006 to hundreds of staff and students in 2013.

There will be a National Night Out Awards Ceremony Saturday, December 14th at the downtown campus in the Buena Vista Theater. The ceremony is scheduled to take place at 10:00 am and is open to the public.

San Antonio/Bexar County were selected by the National Association of Town Watch (NATW) as the 1st place award winners of the National Night Out (NNO) 2013 competition program in the Category 1: 300,000 + population. We all know that there are many communities around the world (including Canada, U.S. Territories, and military installations around the globe) who participate in this annual event to make a difference in fighting crime and drugs, and San Antonio, Texas is just a speck in the sand from all who partake in this annual event. We recognize the hard work that it takes to do even the smallest NNO events, so “hats off” to all those who participated in this year NNO 2013 program and making this special award possible.

Officer Erickson’s Farewell

As you may have heard I will be transferring to University of Texas Southwestern Medical in December 2013. After more than 11 years at the UTSA Police Department, I have learned a great deal from everyone I crossed paths or worked with. It has been a pleasure serving the UTSA community in several capacities. Since joining the Crime Prevention Unit in 2006, I’ve had the honor of working with two wonderful mentors, Inspector Geoffrey Merritt and Sgt Elizabeth Carter. The experiences I have been afforded in my position have enabled me to gain a vast wealth of knowledge. I would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to teach me to be a good police officer and subject matter expert. (Well maybe not an expert!) Thank you for your support and well wishes. Be Safe and aware of your surroundings...help keep UTSA Safe!

Happy Holidays from the Crime Prevention Unit “It’s a Team Thing”

Tips for avoiding Holiday Depression

(High expectations, money woes, and other holiday hazards can spell trouble for anyone)

Plan ahead
Take care of yourself – put on calendar (read book, take nap)
Avoid family conflict
Forget perfection
Learn to grieve; its not uncommon to feel guilty about enjoying the season after losing a loved one or feeling angry about being left alone

Schedule some sleep
Get help – if family is not readily available seek support groups
Prioritize workouts – exercise has been shown to improve moods
Consider your light exposure – lack of exposure to sun can contribute to depression
Focus on what matters - holidays shouldn’t be all about the presents

Tips for surviving Holiday Stress

Find meaning in the season
Anticipate obstacles to your sense of well-being.
Do only one thing in the moment.
If you’re feeling down, do something opposite to how you feel.
Schedule some memorable activities into your holiday season.
Try muscle relaxation.
Self-soothe with taste.
Clean the house.
Try deep breathing.

City of San Antonio and Bexar County NNO 2013 Awards Competition Results

1st: University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA)
2nd: Texas A&M University San Antonio
3rd: St. Mary’s University
Winter Storms & Extreme Cold

While the danger from winter weather varies across the country, nearly all Americans, regardless of where they live, are likely to face some type of severe winter weather at some point in their lives. Winter storms in Central Texas can include dangerously low temperatures, strong winds, icing, sleet, snow, and freezing rain. One of the primary concerns is the winter weather’s ability to knock out heat, power and communications services at UTSA, your home, or office. In extreme situations, heavy snowfall, ice, and extreme cold can immobilize an entire region.

The National Weather Service refers to winter storms as the “Deceptive Killers” because most deaths are indirectly related to the storm. Instead, people die in traffic accidents on icy roads and of hypothermia from prolonged exposure to cold. It is important to be prepared for winter weather before it strikes. To prepare for a winter storm you should do the following: Before winter approaches, add the following supplies to our emergency kit: Rock salt; sand to improve traction; sufficient heating fuel; and adequate clothing and blankets to keep you warm.

During Winter Storms and Extreme Cold
Stay indoors during the storm; walk carefully on snowy, icy, walkways.
Watch for signs of frostbite. These include loss of feeling and white or pale appearance in extremities such as fingers, toes, ear lobes, and the tip of the nose. If symptoms are detected, get medical help immediately.
Watch for signs of hypothermia. These include uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness, and apparent exhaustion. If symptoms of hypothermia are detected, get the victim to a warm location, remove wet clothing, warm the center of the body first and give warm, non-alcoholic beverages if the victim is conscious. Get medical help as soon as possible.

If the pipes freeze, remove any insulation or layers of newspapers and wrap pipes in rags. Completely open all faucets and pour hot water over the pipes, starting where they were most exposed to the cold (or where the cold was most likely to penetrate).
 Maintain ventilation when using kerosene heaters to avoid build-up of toxic fumes. Refuel kerosene heaters outside and keep them at least three feet from flammable objects.

After Winter Storms and Extreme Cold
Continue to protect yourself from frostbite and hypothermia by wearing warm, loose-fitting, lightweight clothing in several layers. Stay indoors, if possible.

With these tips, you can be safe and prepared before the old Jack Frost heads to San Antonio. For more on emergency preparedness, visit the UTSA Campus alerts webpage at www.alerts.utsa.edu. Be Prepared – Make a Plan – Stay Informed! Be safe UTSA!

For more preparedness tips, visit the campus alerts website at www.alerts.utsa.edu. Questions? Send an email to BePreard@utsa.edu or call 458-6851. Have a safe holiday season from The Office of Emergency Management.

Detective Time

Sgt. Thomas Calucci (Supervisor, Criminal Investigations)

For this month’s edition of The Runner Beat, I will explain how the UTSAPD investigations team begins to investigate crimes that are reported on campus. The first step in any investigation is conducted by the patrol officer who responds to the call. This is called a preliminary investigation. The officer will ask the reporting party certain questions which try to determine, what are called, solvability factors. To determine solvability factors, an officer may ask the reporting party: “do you know who did this?”, “do you know where the offender is now?”, or “are there any witnesses to what occurred?” The reporting officer may also determine that there is physical evidence left at the scene. The officer will either collect the evidence themselves or call a detective over to accomplish the task. This evidence is usually fingerprints or DNA left at the scene by the offender. This is another solvability factor.

Once the officer has completed his initial investigation, he or she will write a report and submit it to the UTSAPD records manager. The investigative Sergeant reviews all cases which are generated by the patrol officers and guards. Upon review, the Sergeant determines which cases need to be assigned to a detective for investigation. Once a case is assigned to a detective it then becomes a latent, or follow up investigation. The assigned detective will then prioritize the newly assigned case. Cases which contain solvability factors usually get the highest priority. However, even if there are no solvability factors, the assigned detective will perform a latent investigation to try and prosecute an offender.

I hope this sheds some light on how we begin to investigate crimes that occur on campus. Next month, I’ll touch on how the UTSAPD investigations team responds to and manages a crime scene.

Written by Sergeant Calucci
Schedule of Events For November 2013

Saturday 12/14/13
National Night Out Awards Ceremony. 10 am at the Downtown Campus

Tuesday 2/4/14
Operation Identification
9 am to 12 pm at UC Center
UTSAPD Crime Prevention Unit provides FREE engraving of your valuables!

Thursday 2/20/14
Operation Identification
2 pm to 6 pm at UC Center
UTSAPD Crime Prevention Unit will be engraving bicycles and other valuable property. Have a chance to win a free Mongoose U-Lock!

SD351: Active Shooter
Upon Request
Gain knowledge and strategies for surviving an active shooter situation.

Lost and Found
All found property that is turned in to the University Police Lost & Found section is stored at the University Police Lost & Found for 60 days. After 60 days, the found property is transferred to the Surplus Property Department for public auctions or further disposition.

To report lost property items or to make inquiries regarding lost property call 210.458.6247 (Monday to Friday; 8am to 5pm).

To claim found property items, individuals must present a valid Texas Driver’s license, UTSA photo ID card or a valid photo ID card from another source; military ID or another state photo ID card. Individuals must be able to accurately describe the property that was lost in order to claim property from the lost & found section. ** NOTE—Departments, please promptly turn in any lost and found items you may have so we can return them to their owners in a timely fashion.

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The University of Texas at San Antonio Police Department is providing an instructional video to assist with actions that should be taken during a critical incident such as one involving “shots fired” on our campuses. This 20 minute training video demonstrates how to respond to an active shooter situation and provides critical guidance on what to do to protect yourself. Go to www.utsa.edu/utsapd/Shots_fired/Shots_Fired.html.

Crime Report for the Month of No 2013

The below is a summary of the crimes that occurred as of last month as of 10/25/13. For more information, go to www.utsa.edu/utsapd and click on Crime Stats.

Thefts = 13   Alcohol Arrests = 7
Burglary of Vehicle = 1  Drug Arrests = 8
Assaults = 1   DWI/DUI Arrests = 9
Theft of Motor Vehicle = 1  Other Crimes = 5

UTSA Office of Business Affairs: Your Partner for Successful Solutions!
ALL ACCESS: by Jessenia Skelton (Director of Security Services)

I would like to dedicate this article to Helen White, who will be moving to Austin and leaving UTSA and the Access Services Department this December. Helen has been a valuable asset to the UTSAPD’s Access Services Department and will be sadly missed.

Helen was hired by the UTSA Police Department in June of 2008 as a Administrative Assistant. Throughout her years she was recognized for her hard work and received various awards. In the Fall of 2010 she was awarded the UTSA Police Department Civilian of the Semester Award. Two years later, in 2012, Helen was nominated by her peers for the Access Services, Team Player Award and also along with the Access Services Team, Helen received the UTSA President’s Team Work Award. Helen's accomplishments, and commitment to serving customers while maintaining security indicates how dedicated she is to her job.

Helen has been an important part of our team and has become well known throughout the campus, as she has worked closely with many departments to assist them with their access needs. Stop by the UTSA PD Wednesday December 11, 2013 at 3:30pm to share some cake and punch with Helen.

Thank you Helen for being a part of the Access Services

Welcome To Our New Employees

We’d like to welcome our new employees:
PSO Miguel Orozco
PSO Chris Villarreal
Ofc. Mari Castillo
Ofc. Alicia Dockens
Ofc. Chris Charo
Ofc. Antonio Liendo

The Bottom Line by Chief Steve Barrera

Crime only represents a very small percentage of our population yet it usually leads the news stories of the day. Many times we get used to seeing these stories and think it cannot affect us. This is just a friendly reminder to be alert and aware of your surroundings this holiday season. Make it a habit to lock your property in your trunk and park in well-lit areas; put your alarms on and practice the other safety tips we promote in our articles. These are basic habits that make a big difference. Remember, thieves are looking for crimes of opportunity so don’t make it easy for them to steal your property. Now that the holidays are here please take a moment to enjoy them and count our blessings. Here’s wishing everyone at UTSA a great holiday season and looking forward to another safe year in 2014.

Chief Steve Barrera
UTSA Police Department
Photo From: File

UTSAPD is a CALEA and IACLEA accredited law enforcement agency
Please visit our website at www.utsa.edu/utsapd