

Seasons Greetings from



Neighbourhood Watch SCOTLAND

It's that time of year again! Before the festive season really kicks in, we thought we'd bring you some advice from our partners so that you can keep yourself and others safe. You'll find advice from Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Trading Standards Scotland and the Suzy Lamplugh Trust.

We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to everyone who is involved in Neighbourhood Watch. You play an important role in building safer communities all year round. Please have a happy and safe Christmas and New Year!



Over the festive period towns and cities across Scotland become busier with shoppers during the day and in the evening with people at Christmas events and celebrations. Police Scotland has launched its **'Christmas Stay Safe'** campaign, which provides some simple tips to help you keep yourself safe and enjoy the festive season.



Superintendent Grahame Clarke, from Police Scotland Safer Communities Department said: "At this time of year everyone is busy making preparations for what most deem the most wonderful time of the year. On the run up to Christmas and when celebrating with friends and family take a moment to think about some seasonal precautions.

When out shopping, look after your bags and valuables. Do not leave bags unattended - when in restaurants and shops, always keep them where they can be clearly seen. Don't carry more money than you need, taking care to hide your PIN number when using an ATM and putting your money in your wallet/bag before leaving. Don't walk about with lots of cash in your hands.

At home, don't leave gifts in plain sight, make sure your doors and windows are locked when you go out, and use your security alarm if you have one. It's a good idea to put timers on lights and consider leaving a radio on. Don't make it obvious that your house is unattended.

If you're going away for Christmas, remember to cancel any deliveries you get, like newspapers or milk and if you're on good terms with a neighbour you trust, think about leaving

your contact details and a key with them. Ask them to move mail away from the door to prevent it piling up (which happens more easily at this time of year with Christmas cards arriving), draw the curtains and put your bins out as normal so it looks like someone is still at home.

If you are socialising, stay in control of your drinking, stay with friends, and plan how you're getting home. If you can, pre-book a licensed taxi, travel home with friends, and have your keys to hand when you get home.

Finally, look out for your neighbours, particularly for elderly or vulnerable people in cold weather. Be vigilant for curtains not being open when they normally would be or deliveries gathering around the door if you know the person is at home.

Police Scotland will be working hard this Christmas to keep people safe and by following our 'Christmas Stay Safe' advice, we can all enjoy a happy and peaceful festive season."

For more information go to www.scotland.police.uk



Seasons Greetings from Neighbourhood Watch Scotland

Get your **free** smoke alarms



Join
Scotland's
fight against
fire

Fire can happen to anyone. Every hour of every day there's a house fire in Scotland. Part of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's (SFRS) job is to try to make everyone as safe as possible from fire.

Assistant Chief Officer Lewis Ramsay, Director of Prevention and Protection, said:

"We are delighted to link up with Neighbourhood Watch to offer residents a free Home Fire Safety Visit. We can help

you spot a possible fire hazard, like an overloaded socket. It's easy to miss something in your home. That's where we can help. We'll talk to you about some simple tips that can really reduce your chances of being affected by fire. We can also fit smoke alarms free of charge."

SFRS is asking the community to think about anyone they know who could be at risk from fire. It could be an elderly relative, friend or neighbour who may live alone. A Home Fire Safety Visit could help keep someone you know safe from fire.

Assistant Chief Officer Ramsay said, "Our firefighters will visit at a time that suits, day or night. But we need you to contact us. Tell us about someone at risk before it's too late."

A recent public survey showed that most people know at least some of their neighbours and almost 2 out of 3 people keep an eye on someone else.

But 60% of people asked had never considered fire as an issue and would never have thought of contacting the Fire and Rescue Service on someone's behalf or discussing fire safety with them – even when the other person is deemed to be at risk in some way. Neighbourhood Watch can help the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service make sure that those most vulnerable to fire are as safe as possible via a simple referral process.

To arrange a free Home Fire Safety Visit for you, or someone you know – Call 0800 0731 999 or visit www.firescotland.gov.uk



Top **winter** safety tips

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's new leaflet 'Winter & Festive Safety' offers lots of valuable information. Download a copy from the SFRS website. Here are some top winter safety tips:



- ❄️ Keep portable heaters away from curtains and furniture and never use them for drying clothes.
- ❄️ Unplug or switch off portable heaters when you go out or go to bed.
- ❄️ Fit a Carbon Monoxide detector in all rooms containing gas or paraffin heaters.
- ❄️ Never leave an electric blanket switched on when you're in bed unless it's marked 'suitable for all night use'.
- ❄️ Check your electric blanket, plug and flex regularly for damage. If you're in any doubt, don't use the blanket.
- ❄️ Unplug fairy lights or other electrical Christmas decorations when you leave the house or go to bed.
- ❄️ Extinguish all candles before you go to bed. Never leave a burning candle in a bedroom.
- ❄️ Be especially careful with night lights and tea lights, which can get hot enough to melt plastic. Always put candles on a heat resistant surface/holders.
- ❄️ Leaving cooking unattended or being distracted while cooking is the most frequent cause of fire in the home. Never cook hot food while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- ❄️ Smoking is the main cause of death from fire in the home. Don't smoke in your chair if you've been drinking or you're feeling tired. If you do feel tired smoke outside or stand up and smoke at a window or outside door.
- ❄️ Check your smoke and heat alarms are working. Replace batteries if necessary.



Trading Standards Scotland Tackling Rogue Traders



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SCOTLAND

The bad weather and the impact this can have on people's homes can often bring on an onslaught of opportunistic rogue traders who seek to con victims by charging high prices for poor work or charging for work that is not done or necessary.

“Rogue traders who cold call target vulnerable people, taking their money and their dignity. Say ‘NO’ to cold callers and report them to Trading Standards or the Police.”

Keep yourself and others safe

Be vigilant, look out for friends and family members and report anything you find suspicious to your local trading standards office.

Don't feel pressurised into agreeing to have work carried out. Rogue traders often play on fear and can use this to coerce their victims into having work done. Take time to talk to those close to you and garner their advice.

If you do require work to be undertaken taken, consult the Construction Licensing Executive* for details of reputable traders in your area. Alternatively contact Care and Repair** who offer independent advice and assistance to help older and disabled homeowners to repair, improve or adapt their homes.

Always ask for identification if an unannounced visitor comes to your door.



Remember, for contracts worth over £35, traders are required to provide the consumer with a written notice informing them they have a seven day cooling off period during which they can change their mind and cancel the contract. This notice should give information on how to cancel and a detachable slip to enable this to be carried out.

* <http://clescotland.co.uk/> or 0800 092 1860

** <http://www.careandrepairsotland.co.uk/> or 0141 221 9885

Christmas is a time to relax and have fun but it can also be very busy and stressful. You may be out and about more, or in unfamiliar surroundings. Below is some advice from the Suzy Lamplugh Trust for you to keep in mind to help prevent you from becoming a victim of crime.

**LIVE
LIFE
SAFE**

suzy lamplugh
trust

Christmas Shopping

- 🎁 Don't get loaded down with too many bags. Try to keep one hand free.
- 🎁 Try and avoid taking young children into busy shopping areas. If it is unavoidable make sure they know what to do if they lose you, e.g. tell the nearest counter assistant that they are lost and NEVER leave a shop without you.
- 🎁 Agree a meeting point with older children in case you get separated.
- 🎁 Be careful where you park your car, especially if you will be returning to it after dark.
- 🎁 If parking in a multi-storey car park, choose a well-lit space as close to the exit as possible and away from pillars. Reverse into position.
- 🎁 Keep car doors locked whilst driving in built-up areas, especially if you've got bags of presents in the car.
- 🎁 Don't leave presents on show in a parked car, as they could tempt thieves.
- 🎁 Keep alert and aware of your surroundings, especially in busy shops and crowded streets where thieves and pickpockets may well be operating.
- 🎁 Keep a close watch on your valuables and try not to keep them all in one place.



Christmas Parties

- 🎁 Most of us like a drink or two but remember that alcohol will affect your judgment – don't let it endanger your personal safety.
- 🎁 Remember, the most common date rape drug is alcohol, with victims being given drinks with a far higher alcohol content than they think.
- 🎁 Watch your drinks and food to ensure that nothing is added to them.
- 🎁 Never leave your drink unattended, even if you are going to dance or to the toilet.
- 🎁 If your drink has been left unattended, don't drink any more of it.
- 🎁 If something tastes or looks odd, don't eat/drink any more of it. Be aware, though, that some date rape drugs are colourless and tasteless.
- 🎁 If someone you don't know or trust offers to buy you a drink either decline or accompany them to the bar and watch that nothing is added.



Transport

- 🎁 The party's over and you need to get home. You are likely to be tired and slightly the worse for wear so you need to be careful.
- 🎁 The ideal plan is to book a taxi in advance or call a licensed taxi company from the party and arrange for them to pick you up right outside the venue.
- 🎁 Taxis ply for hire at taxi ranks, stations, airports, etc and may be hailed in the street. A private hire car may not ply for hire and must be pre-booked. The insurance of a private hire car will not be valid if it is not pre-booked.
- 🎁 Always sit in the back of a taxi and if you get chatting to the driver, do not give away personal details. If you feel uneasy with the driver, ask them to stop at a busy familiar place and get out.
- 🎁 If using public transport, have your ticket, pass or change ready in your hand so that your wallet or purse is out of sight.
- 🎁 Always wait for the bus or train in a well-lit place near other people if possible and try and arrange for someone to meet you at the bus stop or station.
- 🎁 Take note of where the emergency alarms are and try to sit near them.
- 🎁 If a bus is empty or it is after dark, you may feel safer on the lower deck as near as possible to the driver.
- 🎁 On trains, avoid empty compartments or compartments that have no access to corridors or other parts of the train. If you feel threatened on any public transport press the alarm and/or make as much noise as possible to attract attention of your fellow passengers or the driver or guard.

➤ **For more advice on personal safety visit www.suzylamplugh.org**



Don't let nasty weather turn into a nasty situation

Heavy rain, strong winds or snow can happen at any time. But taking just an hour to prepare and plan ahead now could save you a lot of trouble later if severe weather strikes.

Make sure your home's ready

Here are some everyday items that could come in handy in the event of severe weather:

- a torch and spare batteries or wind-up torch
- three days' supply of water and ready-to-eat food (that won't go off)
- a battery-powered radio and spare batteries or wind-up radio
- essential medicines, first-aid kit and toiletries
- emergency phone numbers
- copies of important documents like insurance policies and birth certificates
- pencil, paper and a penknife
- baby and pet supplies, if needed
- spare keys for your home and car
- spare glasses or contact lenses
- shovel for snow
- salt for ice

➤ **Visit www.readyscotland.org for more tips on getting Ready for Winter.**



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