

COMMUNITY ALERT



Evanston Police Department
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<http://www.cityofevanston.org/departments/police/>

PICK-POCKETING CRIME ALERT

DON'T MAKE IT EASY TO STEAL YOUR MONEY, PURSE, WALLET, OR TIME!

While most of your fellow pedestrians in Evanston are just like you – busy trying to get to where they're going, engaged in shopping, or distracted with activity around them – there are some who are looking for an easy target in search of a quick payoff.



Over the past month the Evanston Police Department has detected an increase in theft and pick-pocketing crimes throughout the city. Numerous cases involved thefts from unattended purses in restaurants, grocery stores, as well as places of business. Additionally, there have been several subjects pick-pocketing items from citizens by walking closely behind them or strategically bumping into the victim and removing items from their wallets or purses. Offenders are reportedly both female and male and it is unknown if there working collaboratively. The police department is deploying more officers to these affected areas, but we are in need of your assistance to combat these crimes. You can assist us by being alert at all times, **NEVER** leaving your personal items unattended, and adhering to the following crime prevention strategies:

TIPS FOR MEN

- The target areas are back trouser pockets, and coat and sport jackets pockets located both inside and out. A pickpocket generally avoids front trouser pockets, and especially buttoned or zippered pockets.
- If you have to carry your wallet in an unbuttoned jacket, coat or pants pocket, be sure it holds only what you can afford to lose. Keep large sums of money, credit cards, IDs, etc., in your front pocket or any buttoned or zippered pocket. Some people even place a rubber band around their wallet, because the rubber band creates friction and rubs against the fabric of your pocket if someone is attempting to remove it without your knowledge. The best place for keys is on a chain attached to your clothing.
- Never pat your pocket to see if your wallet is there – this lets a criminal know the exact location of your valuables.
- Large-size “pocket secretaries” are particularly inviting to pickpockets, and relatively easy to steal.

TIPS FOR WOMEN

- Do NOT carry your wallet in your purse. Conceal it in a buttoned or zippered pocket where it doesn't show a bulge.
- Use a purse that is difficult to open. A purse with a zipper or snaps is best.
- If you are carrying a shoulder bag, place the strap(s) diagonally across your body, as opposed to carrying it on one shoulder. This keeps the purse in front of you, which sometimes happens with purses with long straps. If you are carrying a hand bag, then make sure to hold it close to the front of your body, instead of holding it on your wrist or loosely in your hand.
- Never leave your purse unattended on a store counter or in a grocery shopping cart.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT PICKPOCKETS

- An experienced pickpocket is not necessarily the sleazy person lurking in dark doorways we expect to see. He (or She!) appears as an average person in both appearance and mannerism.
- Many times, pickpockets work alone; however, there are also teams of two or three, which sometimes will involve a female accomplice. When a female is used in this ‘team effort,’ her role is generally to engage the victim in conversation to distract her or her attention.
- Contrary to what most of us believe, experienced pickpockets do not put their hands all the way into your pocket to steal your belongings. The expert pickpocket reaches into the top of the pocket, takes up a pleat in the lining, and continually folds the lining up until the bottom of the pocket (holding your valuables) reaches the top of the pocket. This entire act only takes one to two seconds.

[FOR ADDITIONAL INFO CONTACT THE COMMUNITY STRATEGIES BUREAU AT 847-866-5019](#)