



KERN COUNTY ELDER NEWS

Monthly Information Article | Kern County DEAR/EDRT TEAM*

*(Dependent/Elder Abuse Review) Team/EDRT (Elder Death Review Team)



DECEMBER 2025

SENIOR HOLIDAY SAFETY



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As the holidays approach, we want to remind everyone about the importance of safety this season-in the comfort of your home or out running errands.

Home Safety

When leaving your home, whether for a few hours, several days or weeks, there are several things you can do to help prevent a break in:

- Leave lights on in a few rooms or install light timers to rotate lights turning on and off around the home.
- Leave a radio on a Newstalk Station. Radio and televisions can also be placed on a timer to vary times when there is sound in the home.
- Have someone pick up your mail and newspapers if you plan to be gone more than a day or two.
- Have a trusted house sitter stay at your home.
- Ask your neighbor to park in your driveway while you are gone.

These all create an illusion that people are in the home which will deter burglars. For those staying home this season, these are additional safety tips to protect your home and belongings:

- Break down large cardboard boxes for items such as new televisions, computers, or other expensive purchases. Leaving these boxes visible lets thieves know there are new, expensive things in your home.
- Keep important papers and valuables in a safe. If possible, have someone bolt the safe to the floor.
- Don't post on social media or leave a calendar visible with information that you will be away from your home.
- Install home security and/or motion lighting systems around your home.

Safety While Traveling

It is important to be aware of weather conditions before you travel. Some parts of Kern experience snow, ice, flooding and fog. Check in to your local

Agency Partners

- Bakersfield Police Department
- California Dept. of Financial Protection & Innovation
- California Dept. of Insurance
- CSUB
- Dept. of Social Services Licensing
- GBLA
- Independent Living Center of KC
- Kaiser Permanente
- Kern Co. Aging & Adult
- Kern Co. BHRS
- Kern Co. Coroner
- Kern Co. District Attorney
- Kern Co. DA Victim Services
- Kern Co. Family Law Facilitator
- Kern Co. Public Health
- Kern Regional Center
- Kern Co. Sheriff's Office
- Kern Co. Veterans Service Dept.
- Social Security Admin.
- Strata Credit Union

news station's weather channel for weather forecasts. Smart phones also have a built-in weather app that can provide you with weather updates. Before you travel:

- Avoid driving in bad weather.
- Wait for the weather to be more cooperative until you venture out.
- Make sure your vehicle is routinely maintained.
- Make sure tires are properly aired and have sufficient tread.
- Be sure you have enough gas to get where you need to go. If you are traveling a long distance, it is best to start with a full tank.
- Pack medications that you may need while you are out.

You may experience traffic while you are out driving, remember:

- Do not engage aggressive drivers.
- Practice patience.
- Do not wait until the last minute to merge into your desired lane. Know where you are going and what lanes you need to be in.
- There will be another parking spot available. It's not worth the fight.
- If public transportation is your mode of travel, be familiar with the schedule and alternate routes home.

While Out in the Community

Always be aware of your surroundings and personal items while you are shopping at stores and malls. The world is not what it used to be; unfortunately, not everyone has good intentions. Your safety is important, and here is how you can prevent being victimized:

- Park close to business entrances. Avoid parking in secluded, dark areas.
- Do not have packages and valuables visible. If you return to your vehicle with packages and need to go into another store, consider moving your vehicle in case someone is watching cars for unattended items.
- Lock your car and make a note where you are parked.
- If you use public transit, sit up front and close to the driver.
- Keep purses and wallets close to your body, and to the front of your body. A cross-body purse or fanny bag is a good selection when shopping as they are snug to your body.
- Never pull out large amounts of cash at the register; instead, pull out bills individually or a card.
- Use the buddy system and go shopping with a friend or family member.
- Try to shop during daylight hours when the stores are less crowded.
- Ask store personnel to help you out to your car to unload heavy items.

Trust your instincts if you feel something is not right. Go back inside the store and ask for store personnel or security to escort you to your vehicle.



Financial Safety

With the hustle and bustle of life, many will look to online shopping for convenience and accessibility. However, caution is still required when paying online as thieves are waiting for the opportunity to access your money. Here are a few ways you can protect your money during the holidays:

- Set up accounts with strong passwords that you will remember or have written down in a secure place.
- Don't click on unreliable links that come in emails or on social media sites. Use only secure websites and shop with known retailer sites. Make sure the website says "https" and not "http" and locate the lock icon within the URL.
- Familiarize yourself with the business' return policy.
- Don't give out passwords or PIN numbers.
- Use a credit card instead of a debit card. If your account is compromised, a credit card provides more protection in getting your money back. Using one credit card will minimize headaches and loss should the account be hacked.
- Don't use public Wi-Fi to make purchases. Use a Virtual Personal Network (VPN) so sensitive information is much less likely to be intercepted.
- When giving online, be extra careful that it is indeed the organization you want to donate or contribute to. If you are unsure, call to inquire before donating.
- Be aware of sites that have an automatic payment option.
- Keep your cards and money secure. Identity theft can happen quickly if your cards are accessed.
- Sign up for fraud protection with your bank and other financial institutes.



On behalf of the all the DEAR Partners and the Kern County District Attorney's Office, we wish all of you the happiest and safest of holiday seasons.



Sources:

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