

Staying safe as crime rises during season

December is a month filled with holiday shopping and celebrating with friends and family.

What many do not realize, however, is that this is the time of the year when local crime rates often increase.

All of us in the law-enforcement community

continue to work hard to protect our region, but it is important that you serve as our eyes and ears in neighborhoods and public places to ensure that Orange County continues to be a safe place to live, work and play.

During the holidays, it is extremely important that local law enforcement and the community partner together to protect our cities.

An example of a successful public and community partnership is the national U.S. Department of Homeland Security's If You See Something, Say Something anti-terrorism public awareness campaign.

While it doesn't focus specifically on crime prevention, the idea of being aware of your surroundings and alerting local authorities if something seems out of place is good to keep in mind regardless of the time of year.

The local version of If You See Something, Say

Something is managed for the county by the Santa Ana and Anaheim police departments.

To remind the community to report anything that might seem out of place, a giant red backpack is on display at John Wayne Airport.

We can all do our part to work together and protect our community.

Here are some additional crime prevention tips:

- Shop during daylight hours when possible.
- Do not leave packages visible through your car windows. Lock them in the trunk or, if possible, take them home.
- Always be aware of your surroundings.
- Be sure to lock doors and windows when you leave your home.
- Don't set up large displays of holiday gifts that can be seen through the windows and doors of your home.

It's easy for each and every one of us to use common sense to recognize something that is unusual or out of place, such as a backpack or box in a public venue. So remember, If You See Something, Say Something!

—Police Chief Carlos Rojas has been with the Santa Ana Police Department more than 24 years. He has a master's degree in criminal justice from Chapman University and a bachelor's degree from Cal State Long Beach.

For more information, visit KeepOCSafe.org.



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