

# Police Chief Reminds Shoppers To Be Aware Of Surroundings After Theft Reports

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EDWARDSVILLE - Edwardsville Police Chief Mike Fillback reminded residents today to be aware of their belongings when shopping at retail establishments throughout the region. He said in recent times, there have been more reports of thefts of purses, wallets, etc. while individuals are visiting various area retail shops.



The chief said a technique used in some of these cases involved one person communicating with an individual and distracting someone, while another cohort performs the actual theft. The next move often was the use of the individual's credit card at the register, he said.

"The tactic is sometimes two work together and one person randomly comes up and starts talking to distract you," he said. "The phone scam started out with elderly folks who are more susceptible and worked its way where it hits all groups. This impacts all age groups, not just the elderly. We encourage people to be more vigilant with their belongings at Christmas time, but we are reminding people now at this time to pay closer attention."

The chief used his wife as an example and said she carries her purse strapped across her shoulder, which makes it very difficult to get to her purse. However, he said he still sees people leave their belongings unattended in stores.

"This is not a unique thing to Edwardsville by any stretch, because there have been some cases of this kind of across the area," the chief said. "This is also happening across the country. At the end of the day, we don't want anyone to take advantage of anyone else and those of us in law enforcement are there to help you in these cases. We encourage you to contact the closest law enforcement agency if something like this happens to you or you see something that doesn't look right at a store."