



Crime Prevention News

January 2014



New Year's Message from Vice President for Public Safety James F. McShane

I would like to wish each of you a healthy and prosperous New Year and welcome you back to campus for the spring semester. In 2013, New York City once again enjoyed an overall decrease in major crime. Correspondingly, Columbia University continues to be one of the safest major universities in the country, due in large part to the men and women of the Department of Public Safety who work tirelessly to prevent crime on campus, and who are relentless in investigating any crimes that do occur. Credit also needs to go to the men and women of our local police in the 26th and 33rd Precincts. Day in and day out, these officers provide a reassuring presence as they patrol the Morningside and Washington Heights areas. Finally, credit must also go to you, the members of the Columbia community. Over the past year, many of you have been instrumental in helping to prevent crime on campus and in identifying suspects when crimes have been committed. It is this willingness to be a part of the solution that has been so critical to our shared success.

As we begin 2014, I would like to ask all of you to continue your diligence and to make a concerted effort to eliminate opportunities for criminal activity by keeping a close watch on your property. During the past year, larcenies, particularly thefts of unattended property, accounted for an exceedingly high percentage of all reported crime on our campuses. You can help to reduce these numbers! Don't leave your possessions unattended in libraries or other public spaces. This is an invitation to theft. Also, please let us know whenever you observe suspicious activity, and be aware of your surroundings, especially when talking or texting on a cell phone. For more advice on staying safe, I encourage you to visit the Crime Prevention Tips link on the NYPD website: http://nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/crime_prevention/crime_prevention_tips.shtml. You can also visit our website at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/publicsafety/>, or call our Crime Prevention office at **212-854-8513** for additional information on crime prevention programs geared specifically to the Columbia community.

**Operation ID
Proven Effective!**

Did you get a New Laptop, MP3 player, Tablet or Cell Phone for the Holidays? Don't Forget Operation ID

Join the thousands of students, faculty and staff who have taken advantage of this FREE and effective crime prevention recovery program. Engravings, registered nationwide, make the resale of stolen property difficult. Persons in possession of stolen registered property can be arrested and the item returned to the owner. For more information or to set up an appointment please call

212-854-8513, or schedule an appointment online <http://dps2.security.columbia.edu/er/engravingrequest.php>

While you're at it, don't forget to download the **latest** laptop recovery software from CUIT called PC & Mac Phone Home, available **free** for students, faculty and staff. You can download it right from the CUIT website. Go to <http://cuit.columbia.edu/pc-phonehome>. PC & Mac Phone home can help the police and Public Safety locate your lost or stolen computer. This program is **FREE** for students, faculty, and staff only and will assist the police and Public Safety locate your laptop or PC anywhere in the world. Any questions, please call CU Crime Prevention at 212-854-8513.



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Add Identity Theft Prevention to Your New Year's Resolutions

Identity theft has become one of the fastest growing crimes in the United States. The Federal Trade Commission estimates that as many as 9 million Americans have their identities stolen each year. Identity theft is a crime in which an impostor (in many cases a friend or family member) obtains key pieces of personal identifying information such as social security numbers and drivers' license numbers and uses them for their own personal gain. It can start with lost or stolen wallets, pilfered mail, a data breach, computer viruses, phishing, a scam, or paper documents thrown out by you or a business (dumpster diving). This crime varies widely, and can include check fraud, credit card fraud, financial identity theft, criminal identity theft, governmental identity theft, and identity fraud. **Start the New Year right:**

- Get a free annual credit report from www.annualcreditreport.com. Check and review your credit report and report any discrepancies to the credit reporting agency. Put an alert on your credit, if necessary.
- Stop receiving prescreened credit card offers by visiting www.optoutprescreen.com or calling 1-888-5-OPTOUT.
- Stop telemarketing calls- www.donotcall.gov .
- Stop receiving unwanted catalogs and other telemarketing mail- <https://www.dmachoice.org>
- Immediate Steps to report ID Theft— <http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/pdf-0009-taking-charge.pdf>



Tax Season, Recycling and Burglary Have Something in Common

What do taxes, recycling, and burglaries have in common? It seems that many people purchase a high-end product or electronic device with their tax returns (good for the economy, right?), recycle the box it came in by putting it in front of their house or apartment door (good for the environment, right?), and come home from work the next day to find that their house has been burglarized, and that *47-inch Flat-screen TV* has been stolen (good for nothing, right?).

Burglars often canvass an area before they strike, so leaving boxes with pictures of high-end items in front of your door is NOT recommended. Following a few simple steps can reduce your chances of being burglarized, and hopefully give you many years of viewing pleasure.

Before discarding your box for recycling, please keep this in mind:

Make sure you check with the store or manufacturer's policy on returns. If you are discarding your box for recycling, cut the box in a way that you can turn it inside out with the picture facing in. Tie it up before putting it out.

Also, keep in mind that marked or engraved items are harder for a burglar to dispose of and easier for police to recover. Join CU Public Safety's Operation ID Program — it's **FREE**, and property is registered with the NYPD & CU. You can also purchase discounted Stop Theft deterrent tags recommended for flat-screen TVs www.stoptheft.com. These tags can be purchased at CU Public Safety at both the Morningside and Medical Center campuses at the discounted price of \$13. For more information please call **212-854-8513**.

