

Crime Prevention News

January 2015



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 2014, New York City once again enjoyed an overall decrease in major crime. Like New York City, 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 are relentless in investigating any crimes that do occur. Credit also needs to go to the men and women of our local police precincts, 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 2015, 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.



Who's Ready for Some Self Defense Classes??

The Department of Public Safety and The Shotokan Karate Club are teaming up to hold several classes in self defense on the following dates & times:

**Monday, January 26, 2015, 6pm-8pm, Morningside Campus,
Lerner Hall, Broadway Room or
Thursday, February 5, 2015, 6pm-8pm, Medical Center Campus
William Black Building, Alumni Auditorium**

Click here for video of some of the topics that will be covered : <http://vimeo.com/62222284>
This is a very popular class, **If you are not sure you can attend please do not RSVP**. There will be additional classes set up in the near future. To RSVP Click here: <http://tiny.cc/selfdefense>. Please indicate which class date you would like to attend. Classes are free of charge. For more information please call our Crime Prevention Office @ 212-854-8513.

Crime Prevention News Page 2
January 2015

ATM Check / Money Order Scams Fraud Alert



As reported by the NYPD and CU Public Safety at the end of 2014, scammers are currently asking people to deposit checks into their personal accounts and offering a tip in exchange for a cash withdrawal. The scam artist will approach you either at an ATM or after you have made a purchase with your bank ATM or Visa Debit card. The scam artist will then offer a significant amount of cash if you will hand over your card and PIN or have you do it for them. Usually the scam artist will use your card and PIN to deposit checks at an ATM, and then withdraw the amount of funds deposited as cash. Basically, the scam artist is using your account as a pass-through account. However, the checks deposited by scam artist are returned as fraudulent and the funds used to cover the returned checks will be deducted from your account. Please remember that you should never hand over your ATM/Debit card and/or PIN to anyone, even to bank employees. By doing so, you are revoking your rights to report this as fraud on your account. While we all have good hearts and are willing to help people, if someone approaches you with this type of scam simply say **“Sorry can’t help you,”** and continue on. When you get to a safe location, call 911 to alert the police of the suspicious activity. In addition, call CU Public Safety at **212-854-5555**.



Tax Season, Recycling, and Burglary all have
Something in Common

What do taxes, recycling, and burglaries have in common? It seems that many people purchase high-end products or electronics 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 their **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 these tips in mind:

- 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**.

For more information on how to safeguard your home please click here:

http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/crime_prevention/safeguardapt.shtml