# NEWS RELEASE

## DIVISION OF POLICE • COLUMBUS, OHIO
### ELAINE BRYANT • CHIEF OF POLICE

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## Crime Prevention at Gas Stations

For awareness and prevention, the Columbus Division of Police is recommending that residents take action(s) to reduce their risk in becoming a victim of crime.

Because self-service gas pumps are used by most people today, carjackers and purse thieves have identified service stations as excellent locations to prey on victims.  The Detectives in the Major Crimes Bureau, Robbery Section, along with Crime Analysts in Patrol, have noticed an increase in these incidents around Columbus and wanted to make sure citizens were made aware so they can use care when fueling their vehicles.

Choose a safe and familiar area during daylight hours whenever possible to top off your fuel tank. Get into a practice of filling up your vehicle's tank when it is half-empty whenever possible; this is also good for your vehicle!  Never let your gas supply get so low that you are forced to stop for fuel in an unsafe or unfamiliar area late at night.  Additionally, thieves look for purses and wallets left on the passenger seat to grab and flee, sometimes to a waiting vehicle, when you are filling the tank; this only takes SECONDS.

### TIPS for Your Safety

Never leave your keys in the ignition.  Take them out of the vehicle and lock your car while you are pumping gas.

Pay attention to your surroundings and don't let anything distract you while filling the tank; especially your phone, which should not be used during this time anyway.

Do not leave your valuables in plain sight when you exit your vehicle.   Even with doors locked and no keys, a thief cannot resist your valuables and windows are expensive to replace.  Do not leave your children in the vehicle to if you go inside the store to pay; regardless if your doors are locked or not.  Take them with you!

Always take your receipt or hit the "clear" or "no" button when using a credit card.

Please be careful, listen to your senses, and report suspicious activity to your local police.


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