

# Features



## UMC Offers Tips to Students During Winter Break

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*Submitted by  
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**Columbia, Missouri** - With winter break approaching quickly, the University of Missouri Police Department is advising students, faculty, staff and community members to take extra precautions before traveling for the holidays.

"Millions of people in the U.S. anxiously look forward to spending time with extended family over the holidays each year," said Mike Laughlin, crime prevention officer with MUPD. "Unfortunately, some criminals are very aware that we may have to be away from our homes while visiting family during this holiday season."

Laughlin offers the following tips for individuals who are traveling for the holidays:

#### **Before you Leave:**

- Stow valuable possessions out of sight or take them home when traveling.
- Be sure to lock windows and doors (including the patio door) before leaving.
- Ask someone who is staying in town to watch your residence and change which lights are on to make it appear someone is home.
- Do not leave bicycles outside.
- Write down the serial numbers of all valuable electronic items. Store those numbers somewhere other than inside the home.
- Visit <http://www.mupolice.com/cp/> to register bicycles and laptops, and access the printable form to record the serial numbers of valuable possessions.

### If Driving to your Destination:

- Check the car's fluid levels and tire pressure to ensure safety.
- Try and maintain at least one-half tank of gas while on the road.
- Let someone know when you are leaving and when you are scheduled to arrive.
- Wear your seat belt.

If the weather is bad, allow extra time for getting to your destination. Have provisions in the car in case you get stranded (first aid kit, coat, flashlight, blanket, etc.)

This article: [UMC Offers Tips to Students During Winter Break](https://showmetimes.com) was first published on <https://showmetimes.com>.

Written by Dee Loflin

Date: December 10th 2013



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