



## **Thieves are Holiday Shopping Too – Warns VPD and Safer Parking Initiative** *Canadian Direct Insurance Provides Guidance for Safer Holiday Shopping*

**VANCOUVER, December 16, 2010** – Vancouver’s busiest shopping period is fast approaching, as visitors flock to the city’s downtown shopping district to buy holiday gifts and enjoy the winter attractions. But, amidst the cheerful festivities, criminals see treasure-trunks in the busy parking lots that hold thousands of dollars worth of holiday loot.

“Criminals enjoy holiday shopping too, but it’s usually from the trunk of your car,” warns Detective Phil Ens, VPD Auto Crime Enforcement Unit. “People are doing larger shopping trips and lots of errands this time of year, so there are lots of valuables being left in unattended vehicles.” Detective Ens also cautions that visitors be extra careful, as thieves favor out-of-province plates over vehicles with local licenses.

“Holiday shoppers and visitors should look for the Safer Parking Award logo when choosing where to park,” says Colin Brown, Chief Operating Officer of Canadian Direct Insurance and sponsor of the Safer Parking Initiative. “Since the program’s inception, the Safer Parking Initiative has gained the participation of every major parking lot owner and manager in the city; we’ve seen the program grow from 5 awarded lots to 35 awarded lots, and overall have seen a 25 percent decrease in crime in Safer Parking Award winning lots, with several facilities reporting zero-crime occurrences on a monthly basis.”

“The biggest mistake people make is to leave possessions in plain sight,” says Brown. “During the holiday season people are busy and can become careless. It can take under a minute for your car to be robbed, so your quick stop at by the liquor store is an eternity for thieves.”

The VPD and Canadian Direct Insurance are encouraging shoppers to choose parking facilities with the Safer Parking Award, which identifies parking facilities whose managers and owners have taken extra steps to ensure a safer environment for customers.

## **10 Tips to Safer Holiday Shopping, from Canadian Direct Insurance**

- 1. Choose a parking facility with the Safer Parking Award Logo!**
2. Many stores will hold purchases in the store while you shop – no need to leave them in your car.
3. Limit the number of stops you make during the same trip. Every time you leave your car there is an opportunity for thieves to break-in.
4. Do not store gifts or purchases in your trunk – thieves often follow customers out to their car only to break into the trunk when they leave.
5. Use a visible anti-theft device and vehicle immobilizer; they make your car safer and give you a discount on your insurance.
6. Spread out your holiday shopping trips, so gifts don't accumulate in your vehicle.
7. Remove garage door openers and insurance papers from your car. Together they will give a thief your home address, and a way to get in.
8. Don't leave ANY possessions in your vehicle. Leave a sign on your dashboard that says there are no possessions in the car.
9. Choose a parking facility that is clean and bright, has onsite security features and a parking attendant.
10. Make sure the parking facility has noticeable entrance and exit points for vehicles and pedestrians.

### **About the Safer Parking Initiative**

Safer Parking Initiative (SPI), launched in August 2007, is a partnership between the Vancouver Police Department (VPD), Canadian Direct Insurance, and a coalition of organizations including parking lot owners, operators, businesses and community groups. SPI's mandate is to improve the reality and perception of safety and security in Vancouver parking facilities in order to help reduce crime and increase the public's confidence in Vancouver, making the city an even more desirable destination to work, live and visit. For more information visit [www.SaferParkingVancouver.com](http://www.SaferParkingVancouver.com)

**-30-**

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## Safer Parking Awarded Facilities:

### EasyPark

- 900 W Cordova St.
- 160 Water St.
- Pacific Centre 701 W. Georgia St.
- Pacific Centre North, 777 Dunsmuir St.



### Diamond Parking

- Pacific Palisades Hotel, 1277 Robson Street
- Jewish Community Centre, 950 W. 41 Ave
- 2148 W. 4th Ave
- 2315 W. 4th Ave
- 553 W. 7th Ave
- 1495 W. 8th Ave
- 933 Seymour St.
- 1034 -1040 Robson St. (in rear alley)
- Capers Market, 1675 Robson St.
- 1766 Robson St.
- 1505 Mariners Walk
- 1154 W. Broadway
- 2150 W. Broadway
- 817 Denman St.
- 1001-1017 Denman St.
- 1420 W. Georgia St.
- 2012 McDonald St.
- 1131 – 1151 Haro St. (in rear alley)



### Advanced Parking

- Bentall Centre, 540 Thurlow St.
- Bentall Centre, 550 Burrard St.
- Bentall Centre, 1040 W. Pender St.
- 900 Burrard St. Paramount Place



### Owned by Polaris Realty, Managed by Impark

- 1166 Alberni St.
- 1055 Canada Place, New Convention Centre
- 450 W. Cordova St., Harbour Centre
- 500 W. Cordova St. Harbour Centre
- 333 Dunsmuir St.
- 999 W. Hastings St. Axa Building



### Managed by Westin

- Westin Bayshore Main Parkade, 1620 Bayshore Drive
- Westin Bayshore Central Parkade, 1675 Bayshore Drive



### Vinci Park

- 1130 W. Pender St.

