

## Smash, cash and carry – avoiding theft this Christmas

**Auckland, 12 December 2017** – The theft before Christmas could be coming to a doorstep near you, warns AA Insurance.

Increased numbers of Kiwis shopping online means greater opportunity for thieves to uplift your doorstep deliveries, so have items delivered to where you'll be during the day, or ask the courier to deliver it to your neighbours.

This is just one of the tips for keeping you and your purchases safe over the Christmas period.

“While we are always here for our customers when unexpected things go wrong, we'd rather help them prevent bad things happening, especially at this time of year when it can already be stressful,” says Amelia Macandrew, Customer Relations Manager, AA Insurance.

“So, if you are making a purchase online be sure to be at the delivery address to receive it. Although if you can't be home, take advantage of the courier companies that let you have your deliveries hidden in a special place, at the neighbours, or at a drop off point that you can collect from later. Keep tempting items away from the door step, gate or overstuffed letterbox and out of view – because out of sight is out of mind.”

This sentiment also holds true for unloading shopping and groceries from your car, especially if you park near the road and in full view of passersby. Shut and lock the boot and doors to your car between each trip to the house, or have someone wait with the items while you unload.

According to the AA Insurance Driver Security Survey, which interviewed over 1,014 Kiwi drivers aged 18+years, 89 per cent of us always lock our car, yet over a third are still at risk of having possessions stolen because we continue to leave them in our cars. Of the 30 per cent of respondents who had their cars broken into, nearly three quarters had their contents stolen, including smaller items like spare change and groceries.

“It's not uncommon for Christmas shopping, groceries or even travel items to be stolen from homes and cars, which can be heart-breaking and really ruin the Christmas spirit,” says Amelia. “One AA Insurance

customer came home to discover she'd been broken into and her Chrisco Christmas hampers were among the items taken.

“With the silly season upon us it makes even more sense to keep your valuables out of sight, whether they are away from the windows in home, or in the boot of your car where they can't be seen,” continues Amelia. “Remember to lock your home and your car before you leave them and, if you have one, initiate the security alarm. It seems obvious, but they only work if you use them. “

### AA Insurance's 10 top tips for a safer holiday

#### Burglaries

1. Don't advertise the fact your home is unattended by leaving messages on your answering machine or on social networking sites, or having parcels delivered to an empty house.
2. Gifts under the tree are tempting for thieves so make sure they, and other valuables, can't be seen from the outside the home. Also be careful when disposing of any tell-tale packaging.
3. Let your neighbours know if you're going to be away, give them your contact phone number, and ask them to clear your mail, put washing on the line, or park in your driveway.
4. Make it difficult for someone to break into your home – lock your shed, put away your tools and wheelie bins, and trim trees and shrubs so there are no places for burglars to hide.
5. There are a wide range of security options to help protect your home that often complement each other, such as alarms, security lights, and deadlocks on doors and windows. But they'll only work if you use them – even if you aren't out for long.

#### Theft from cars

6. Lock your car, no matter where it's parked and keep your keys with you. Try to park in open, well-lit areas, or an attended, secure parking building.
7. Take valuables (e.g. wallet, sunglasses, mobile, iPods) with you, don't leave in the glove box or under a seat.
8. If you need to leave items in your car then keep them in the boot where they can't be seen. Don't have them on display.
9. Remove the detachable faceplate of your stereo, GPS cradle and mobile charger.
10. Install additional security to your car such as an alarm, or immobiliser, to help deter thieves.

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### **About AA Insurance**

AA Insurance is an independently operated, New Zealand-based joint venture between the New Zealand Automobile Association (NZAA) and Suncorp Group. We have demonstrated trusted expertise in home, contents and car insurance in New Zealand since 1994. We underwrite our own policies and sell direct to New Zealanders. Our more than 700 staff look after over 375,000 customers with over 710,000 policies.

We proudly partner with Eden Park, support youth charity Blue Light, and have been consistently recognised by: Reader's Digest Most Trusted Brands (since 2011), NZ Insurance Industry Awards (since 2012), IBM Kenexa Best Workplaces Survey (since 2008), Canstar Blue Most Satisfied Customers (2011-2016), and the Colmar Brunton Corporate Reputation Index (since 2015) that recognises New Zealand's most successful companies.

AA Insurance has an A+ (Strong) Insurer Financial Strength Rating given by Standard and Poor's (Australia) Pty Ltd. For further information visit [www.aainsurance.co.nz](http://www.aainsurance.co.nz).

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