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Pre-holiday theft rate high

Students this time of year are worrying about finals, Christmas and their transportation home. Those living in residence halls also should be worrying about theft.

During weeks before Christmas vacation, like the end of the semester in May, theft increases on campus, according to Lt. Robert Edmunds of UNL Campus Police.

"In 1973, during November and December, 172 thefts totaling \$4,043 worth of merchandise was reported. The rate increases each year," Edmunds said.

He stressed the need for students to follow precautionary measures to prevent theft.

Dorm residents should always lock their doors, even if they are to be gone for a few minutes, Edmunds said, because it takes a thief approximately 30 seconds to get what he wants.

"The biggest enemy a student has is his or her own carelessness," he said.

According to Edmunds, valuables should also be marked with an identification number, such as a social security number. This makes it possible to trace stolen goods much more quickly, he said.

Scribers are available for enscribing valuables, free of charge, in residence halls, Greek houses, co-ops and the campus police office, he said. Serial numbers and license numbers can be

registered with the police.

"Without the serial number, it is difficult to identify stolen materials or make a court case stick," Edmunds said.

Edmunds said bicycles should be kept in dorm rooms or taken home over the semester break. Small valuables should be taken home, he said.

According to Glen Schumann of the Housing Office, each dorm room is carefully checked by SAs before Christmas break. They lock windows, check drapes, unplug electrical appliances, turn the fan to low and open radiators.

Each door in the residence hall, including hall and stair doors, is then locked, Schumann said.

Security measures continue through semester break. Edmunds said the police department takes extra precautions including more concentrated patrolling of the dorms.

A dangerous time is from January 8 until classes start, a time when the dormitories are only half full, according to Schumann. SAs and students should keep a special alert for strangers on their floor, he said.

Edmunds also encouraged students to mark their new Christmas gifts with a scribe when they return to campus.

"If a theft does occur, report it immediately. The chances of recovering the item diminish the longer a student waits to report it," he said.

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