

Leaving Purses Unattended in Grocery Carts *Don't Do It!*

It's the all too familiar sight; a woman's purse just sitting unattended in the upper part of a grocery cart. In some cases, the woman is inside the grocery store and realizes she forgot an item at the other end of the aisle. Instead of pushing her cart and retrieving the item, she leaves her cart AND PURSE and walks to the other end of the aisle to get the item. In other cases, the woman leaves her purse in the cart while she is bending over loading groceries in the trunk of her car. Do you see yourself in either of these examples? If so, you are at risk to becoming the victim of a purse snatching.

Both of the above examples, the women are giving purse snatchers an easy opportunity to steal a purse. Purse snatchers are looking for easy targets. They are looking for women who are not paying attention to their surroundings and leaving their purses unattended. A

number of purses have also been grabbed right out of a woman's cart while unloading groceries into the trunk. In many cases, the purse snatcher merely has to reach out the window of their car and pull the purse right off the cart.

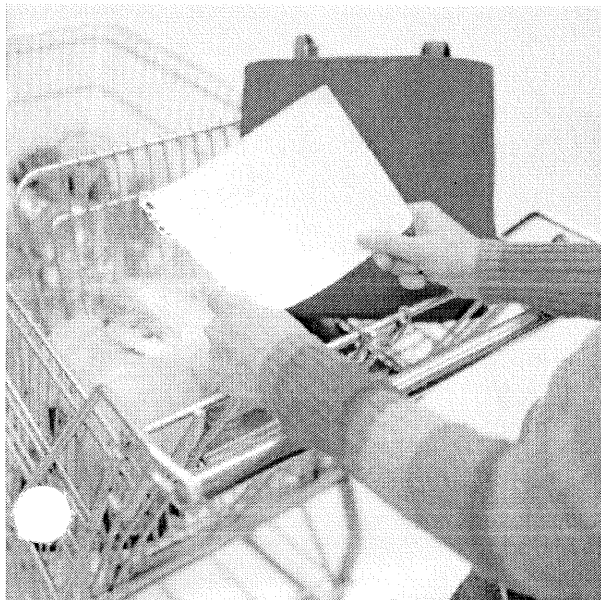
I once sent several of my employees to various stores in Summit County to observe women shoppers and how they handled their purses. My employees observed 106 women and noted the following: Thirty women left their purses completely unattended in their carts and numerous other women had their purses dangling from their wrist or shoulder while they unloaded their groceries. There were only 11 women out of 106 who protected



their purses by putting them into their car and THEN unloading their groceries.

Why are so many women careless with their purses? I suspect it's because many women are too trusting and just do not think about someone snatching their purse. Also, the women who were observed were all shopping during the day. Don't assume that you are safe during the day. Most purses are stolen during the day in store parking lots.

While a victim of a purse snatching is not to blame for the crime (the criminal is to blame), let's not make it easy for purse snatchers by leaving your purse unattended. Always remember: Put your purse in your car and THEN unload your groceries! And never leave your purse unattended.



SHERRI BEVAN WALSH Prosecuting Attorney County of Summit

Sherri Bevan Walsh has been our county prosecutor since 2001. In 2007, she was honored as Public Official of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers for her commitment to crime victims. In 2006, she was



named Prosecutor of the Year by the Ohio Patrolmen's Benevolent Association for her aggressive prosecution of criminals. In 2005, the Child Support Enforcement Agency, a division of the Summit County Prosecutor's Office, was awarded the Most Improved Child Support Program in the Country for its outstanding work. This year, she is serving as Vice President of the Ohio Prosecuting Attorney's Association after having served on its Executive Board for the past seven years. She was also appointed by Attorney General Marc Dann to Chair his State Victims Assistance Advisory Board.

In her position as Prosecutor, her goal is to aggressively prosecute criminals and ensure that victims receive support and assistance throughout the criminal justice proceedings. In 2007, her criminal division handled approximately 4,000 defendants who committed felony crimes in Summit County, with a conviction rate of 95 percent.

Walsh has been an attorney in the Summit County area for 22 years. She previously served as an Assistant Prosecutor for the City of Akron, a Magistrate in three Summit County courts, and as a Police Legal Advisor. She also was a partner for 10 years in the law firm of Bevan & Associates.

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