

Thefts from Shoppers at Two Darien Grocery Stores on Same Day

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A wallet and an entire purse were taken from two grocery store customers in Darien on the same day, Sunday July 25 — one at Stop and Shop on Heights Road, the other at Trader Joe's, police said.

Within hours of the thefts — by the time the victims realized their credit cards were gone and contacted the card issuers — hundreds of dollars had already been charged to each card, Darien police said. Police did not say whether they suspect the two incidents are connected.

Police described each incident this way:

At Stop & Shop

A shopper at Stop & Shop at 148 Heights Road told police that she was in the store between 2 and 2:30 p.m., then, as she was in the checkout lane, she realized her purse wasn't in her pocketbook.

She had \$50 in the purse, along with her driver's license and bank cards. When she arrived home, she called the card issuers to cancel the missing cards.

While on the phone, she was told her cards already had been used three times, racking up \$748 in charges. The locations of the purchases hadn't been determined by the time of the police announcement on Monday, Aug. 5.

The woman didn't know when her purse went missing.

At Trader Joe's

On the same day, from about 3:10 to 3:55 p.m., a shopper at Trader Joe's went through the store at 436 Post Road before going to the checkout lane to pay for her groceries.

She found her wallet was missing when she opened her pocketbook. The pocketbook had been in the seat part of her shopping cart. Her wallet had \$400 in cash in it, along with several bank cards.

When the woman went to her vehicle, she got a call from a credit card company telling her that \$594 had been charged to her card from one of the Walmart stores in Norwalk. She later found that one of her cards had been used at Costco for an unspecified amount.

Suggestions to Keep This From Happening to You

- This is not the first time customers with wallets in their shopping carts have been victimized by thieves in Darien stores.
- If you keep your wallet in your car (either covered or where it can't be seen through the car windows), you can bring a card or cash in the store in one of your pockets.
- Alternately, you can hold your purse or wallet or keep it within sight while shopping (which sounds harder than just leaving them in the car, but your comfort level may vary).
- Once your wallet has been stolen, even if your card issuer doesn't charge you for fraudulent transactions, you'll go through anguish, time and trouble getting card accounts frozen. And then you'll have to get a new driver's license.