





# HOLIDAY SHOPPING SAFETY TIPS

The holiday season is always a special time of year. The bad guys use the holiday season to find easy targets. As you shop, please be mindful of the following safety tips to help keep your holiday shopping safe and joyous!

## How to Report a Tip

 Call 713.222.TIPS (8477)

 Text TIP610 plus your tip to CRIMES (274637)

 Use our **Mobile App**

 Go to [crime-stoppers.org](http://crime-stoppers.org)

Tipsters will remain anonymous and could be eligible for a cash reward of up to \$5,000.

## Did you know?

- 46% of holiday shopping will be done online.
- In 2015, 1 out of 86 online credit card transactions was a fraudulent attempt.
- 21% of holiday merchandise will be purchased using a smartphone.
- There are approximately 15 million victims of identity fraud each year.
- Identity theft and robberies are two of the most common crimes during the holiday season.
- 51% of online retailers do not attempt to lock a consumer out after 10 incorrect login attempts; therefore, fraudsters have an unlimited amount of attempts into your online profile/account.



## WHILE SHOPPING

### Be aware of your surroundings. Look for suspicious persons, etc. when you are in any area.

- Shop during the day when possible, avoid shopping alone after dark.
- Keep your purse and bags closed at all times.
- Credit cards are the safest form of payment.
- Don't buy more than you can comfortably carry or ask a store employee to assist you to your vehicle.
- Consolidate your purchase into larger bags.
- Avoid wearing expensive jewelry or handbags.
- If using an ATM:
  - Choose one located inside a bank, mall, grocery store, etc. rather than a stand-alone and make sure it is in a well-lit area.
  - Protect your PIN from anyone standing around you.
  - Hold on to your ATM receipt – don't leave it around the area.
  - Only withdraw the amount of cash needed – don't carry large amounts of cash.



## ONLINE SHOPPING

**Before you start your holiday shopping, remember to STOP. THINK. CONNECT.: Make sure security measures are in place, and enjoy the benefits of the Internet.**

- Shop from a secure network connection such as your home, avoid using public Wi-Fi.
- Ensure your anti-virus software is updated on your home computer and mobile devices.
- Use strong passwords even if online retailers are accepting “weak” ones allowing your information to become susceptible to fraudulent activity.
- Use familiar and safe websites (indicated by a lock symbol or https://).
- Save receipts and review your statements regularly for discrepancies.
- Consider having packages sent to a work address if you will not be home during delivery and utilize online in-store pick up or ship-to-store options.



## SHOPPING WITH KIDS

**Make a rule that you must always be able to see them and they must always be able to see you. It may sound simple, but keep reminding them periodically, especially if you think they are getting restless.**

- Teach children to ask store personal or security for help if you become separated.
- Children should not be allowed to go to the car or restroom alone.
- Do not leave children unattended in play areas or arcades.
- Ensure that children know their full name and your cell phone number.
- Never leave children alone in the car!



## IN THE PARKING LOT

**Remember where you parked your car. While this may sound elementary, many shopping areas are spread out over large areas. Being unable to locate a car can cause you undue confusion and stress that may make you an easy target to a criminal.**

- Lock your doors and don't leave valuables in your vehicle including purchases.
- Be alert and off of your cell phone.
- Be ready to unlock your car.
- Park in well-lit areas.
- Do not resist if someone tries to take any of your belongings – nothing is worth your life.