

Holiday Shopping Tips

The winter holiday season is the busiest time of the year for shopping, which means there are lots of people walking around with money to spend on those precious holiday gifts. This also means that this is the best time for criminals, crooks, and thieves to come out. They know this is the perfect time of year to do their business because people are rushing around, stressed out and careless, trying to get everything done. Here are some helpful tips to prevent from being a victim of theft this holiday season:

When using ATM machines:

- Try to use them in crowded areas and constantly be aware of your surroundings.
- Try and use them during the day and not at night when it is dark.
- If you must use one at night, pick a machine that is well lit and visible by others or passing traffic.
- Don't use a machine if you see someone suspiciously creeping around. Go find another one to use.

When you are at the mall:

- It's best to try and shop when it is less crowded (which everyone tries to do anyway). It's a lot easier to lose a child in a large crowd.
- Don't make your purse or handbag easy to snatch. Dangling your purse is an easy target. You can either tuck it tightly under your arm or try using a fanny pack.
- If you keep your money in your pockets keep it in your front pockets and not your back. It may also be a good idea to spread your money in different pockets, so if you do become a victim you won't lose all your money.
- Don't flash large amounts of cash in public. It's like a homing beacon for criminals.
- Make sure you always get back your credit card when making a purchase.
- Make sure your credit card doesn't get overcharged. Sometimes a cashier may run the card through twice. Make sure to keep all receipts and check them against monthly bills.
- Keep a list of your credit cards in case they are stolen, so you can quickly cancel them.
- Don't overload on packages. This will make you an easy target. Drop off packages to your car whenever necessary.
- It's always good to shop with others whenever possible, especially when you are with a young child. They can help watch over them if you are in a long line.
- Teach your child what to do in case you become separated. The best thing to teach them is to go to the nearest police officer, security guard, or customer service desk.

In the parking lot:

- Park where there is plenty of light around your car and from your car to the entrance of the mall or store.
- Make sure you remember where your car is parked. Searching aimlessly after shopping makes you more acceptable to those creepy crooks waiting in the shadows.
- Don't be scared to ask a security officer for an escort if you feel unsafe.



Success Depends
on Making the
Right Choice

- Keep packages in the trunk of your car. Packages that are easily visible make your car a bigger target for a break in.
- Have your keys ready before you get to your car. Don't be jumbling around in your purse for your keys when you get to your car. We've all seen people get jumped in the movies for making that mistake.

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