

Safety Tips for The Holidays



Pasco Sheriff's Office
Crime Prevention Unit

Season's Greeting's

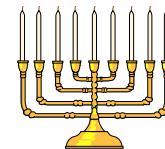
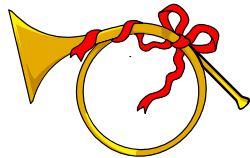
Bob White, Sheriff



The holiday season is filled with happiness and celebration, but it can also be a time of danger. Unfortunately, there are criminals who use the holidays to target victims who may be distracted by the busy season.

The holidays can present potentially dangerous situations for children. Some simple prevention measures can help keep your children safe during the season.

- If possible, leave small children at home with a trusted babysitter.
- Teach your child to go to a store clerk and ask for help in case your child is separated from you.
- Teach children to stay close to you at all times while shopping.
- Never allow children to make unaccompanied trips to the restroom.
- Children should never be allowed to go to the car alone and they should never be left alone in the car.
- Teach children their full name, address and telephone number to give to police officers or mall security. Teach children to immediately inform you if a stranger is bothering them.
- Take a photo of your children with your camera phone before you go shopping in case they get lost. You will then have an immediate, accurate description of what they are wearing and what they look like for police or store security.



The holiday season is a time when busy people can become careless and vulnerable to theft during their shopping.

- Shop during daylight hours whenever possible. If you must shop at night, go with a friend or family member.
- Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- Only carry the necessary cash, checks and/or a credit card you expect to use.
- Stay alert to your surroundings.
- Pay for purchases with a check or credit card when possible.
- Keep cash in your front pocket.
- Notify the credit card issuer immediately if your credit card is lost, stolen or misused.
- Keep a record of all of your credit card numbers in a safe place at home.
- Be extra careful if you do carry a wallet or purse. They are the prime targets of criminals. Do not get hurt fighting a purse snatcher.
- Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason. At this time of year, "con-artists" may try various methods of distracting you with the intention of taking your money or belongings.



Driving on shopping trips during the holidays requires some extra safety precautions.

- Avoid driving alone or at night.
- Keep all car doors locked and windows closed while in or out of your car. Set your alarm or use an anti-theft device.
- If you must shop at night, park in a well-lighted area.
- Avoid parking next to vans, trucks with camper shells, or cars with tinted windows.
- Park as close as you can to your destination and take notice of where you parked.
- Never leave your car unoccupied with the motor running or with children inside.
- Do not leave packages or valuables on the seat of your car. If you must leave something in the car, lock it in the trunk or put it out of sight.
- Be sure to locate your keys prior to going to your car.
- Keep a secure hold on your purse, handbag and parcels. Do not put them down or on top of the car in order to open the door.
- When approaching and leaving your vehicle be aware of your surroundings.
- Do not approach your car alone if there are suspicious people in the area.
- Ask mall or store security for an escort before leaving your shopping location.



Don't let the rush and excitement of the holiday season make you careless in protecting your home from potential criminals or dangerous hazards.

- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave the house, even for a few minutes.
- When leaving home for an extended time, have a neighbor or family member watch your house and pick up your newspapers and mail.
- Indoor and outdoor lights should be on an automatic timer.
- Leave a radio or television on so the house looks and sounds occupied.
- Large displays of holiday gifts should not be visible through the windows and doors of your home.
- When setting up a Christmas tree or other holiday display, make sure doors and passageways are clear inside your home.
- Be sure your Christmas tree is mounted on a sturdy base so children, elderly persons or family pets cannot pull it over on themselves.
- If you use lights on your Christmas tree ensure the wiring is not damaged or frayed. Frayed or damaged wiring can cause a fire.
- Place your Christmas tree in water or wet sand to keep it green.