

10 Powerful Ideas For Your Holiday Shopping Security

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The holiday season is a wonderful time of the year -- but it is also the prime rip-off time for the "bad guys" -- so here are some great ideas suggested by crime prevention experts to enhance your holiday shopping security:

- 1 -- Carry only the credit cards, cash and checks you will need for your shopping. In general, it is best to avoid carrying large amounts of cash -- use credit cards or checks, if possible, to make your purchases.
- 2 -- If your credit card is stolen, misused or lost -- please notify your credit card issuer at once. In fact, it's a good idea to keep a complete inventory of your credit cards at home, along with their 800 numbers, just in case of these types of mishaps.
- 3 -- If you need to use an ATM while shopping -- remember to use one located inside a busy, well-lit location and to withdraw only the amount of cash you actually need. Also, protect your PIN by shielding the ATM keypad from any person who may be standing near you (and do not give out your PIN to anyone), and don't throw away your ATM receipt at the ATM location. And please -- don't "flash your cash."
- 4 -- Don't carry a purse or wallet, if possible -- they are the prime targets of the "bad guys," even in crowded shopping areas. Also, avoid wearing expensive jewelry. In other words, it might be a good idea to leave that diamond encrusted, solid gold Swiss wonder-watch at home!
- 5 -- Carry cash in your front pocket. If you do carry a shoulder bag, it's best to carry it in front of you.
- 6 -- Stay alert at all times -- even though there are a million things on your mind and you have a dozen things to do, please be aware of your surroundings. Remember the "bad guys" will be more likely to confront you if they think you are distracted.
- 7 -- If you have a cellular phone, be sure to carry it on your person while shopping for added security. If you don't have a cell phone, you might consider getting one as a holiday gift -- for yourself.
- 8 -- Try to avoid driving alone or at night, and travel on busy, well-lit roads. Keep your doors and windows closed while in or out of your vehicle. Park as close as you can to your shopping and remember where you have parked. Don't approach your vehicle alone if you observe suspicious people in the vicinity. And please, never leave your vehicle unoccupied with the engine running or with children inside! A quick security idea: many malls and shopping centers would be happy to supply a security escort to your car if you request it.
- 9 -- Don't overload yourself with all those packages of holiday goodies! It vital to have clear visibility to avoid accidents and observe suspicious people. Once you make your purchases, it's a good plan to secure them in your vehicle's trunk or cover them with a sheet or blanket -- never leave them in open view. Don't create a temptation for criminals.
- 10 - Beware of suspicious people approaching you. Especially during the holiday season, the "bad guys" are always looking for opportunities to take your hard-earned

money or property. In short, **don't leave your common sense at home while doing your holiday shopping.**

A final thought - remember that even criminals need to do their holiday shopping, so do your best so that "you" don't become the "bad guy's" shopping mall.

"Staying Safe" with Bruce Mandelblit is a regular column for the readers of NewsMax.com and NewsMax.com Magazine.

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