

Holiday shopping tips from law enforcement

Shopping isn't always a harmless endeavor, especially when stores are crowded.

Washoe County sheriff's deputies are offering some cautionary words for those going out this holiday weekend as well as those making purchases online.

Some tips:

- Stay alert. Report suspicious activity to law enforcement or store security.
- Avoid shopping alone; there is added safety when shopping with a companion.
- Always lock vehicles and keep valuables out of sight, preferably in the trunk or locked compartment.
- Park and walk in well-lighted areas.
- Don't overload yourself with packages. Maintain visibility and mobility to avoid potential threats.
- Be wary of strangers approaching you for any reason. The holiday season is notorious for con-artists who may attempt to distract you with the intention of taking your money or belongings.
- Avoid carrying large amount of cash and valuables, and avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- Read credit card statements and bank statements as soon as you get them to make sure there are no unauthorized charges. If there is a discrepancy, report it immediately.
- Always type a website address yourself or access it through trusted search engines.
- Never click on an email link taking you to a purchase site. The link may take you to a fraudulent site.
- Don't allow online sites to maintain your credit card

information. Although it's convenient, this is risky.

- When having items shipped to your residence, make sure they are taken inside timely, preventing thieves from taking them or realizing nobody is home and potentially leaving yourself exposed to a burglary.
- Whenever possible, use a credit card instead of debit card or check. Credit cards have an additional level of consumer protection in the event of a fraudulent purchase or disputed transactions.