



Enjoy a Secure Holiday Season



It's easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the holidays. You've got parties, decorations and shopping on your mind—but that's all the more reason to be aware and keep alert of any potential dangers.

Thanksgiving marks the beginning of one of the busiest shopping seasons of the year. The stores and parking lots are crowded with holiday shoppers. Rushing for an early bird special or navigating one's way through a crowded store armed with packages can leave you feeling overwhelmed and distracted, as well as a target of unsuspecting crime. The men and women of the Novi Police Department warn "criminals love the holiday season especially because it is an opportune time for crime with more people shopping and traveling."

In an effort to ensure everyone has a safe and fun holiday shopping season, the Novi Police and Fire Departments offer the following Holiday Safety Tips.

Safe Shopping Basics

Safe shopping should be a priority for everyone. When out shopping remember:

- Have a shopping plan...let someone else know what your plan is including when you intend on being home.
- Shop before dark.
- Coordinate shopping trips with friends.
- Park in a well-lighted area

and try not to walk to your car alone.

- Lock your car and REMEMBER WHERE YOU PARKED IT, when you return be prepared to get in and go about your business...don't loiter about holding packages.
- Secure packages in the trunk of your vehicle.
- If you place packages in your vehicle, mid-trip, you may want to move your car.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash and don't carry it all in one place.
- Be careful with wallets and purses.

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Vehicle Security

Leaving valuables in plain sight or leaving keys in unlocked cars can be costly. A few reminders regarding vehicle security:

- Always lock your car.
- Secure your valuables in the trunk, store them out of sight, or take them with you.
- Before leaving your workplace, lock your laptop or valuables in your trunk in case you have to make a stop.



You don't want potential thieves to see you placing valuables in the trunk.

- Make sure all car windows are closed when the vehicle is unoccupied.
- After dark, park in a well-lit area.
- If you have a car alarm, be sure to set it.

Protect Your Identity

- Only carry the Credit/Debit cards you will be using.
- Remember to sign your Credit/Debit cards.
- Cover your account and personal information as you hand it to the cashier. Speak softly to the cashier as you provide personal information.
- Guard any keypads as you enter your pin number.



- When using an ATM machine look around to ensure nobody is watching as you enter you pin number. Use only ATM machines that are located in well-lighted and populated areas.

Safe Parking

- Be sure to lock your car.
- Keep any valuables left in your car out of sight. Preferably, leave valuables in your trunk.
- If you do not have a trunk, keep valuables out of sight by covering them or placing them on the floorboards or under the seat.
- Do not unlock your vehicle until you are close enough



to scan the area. Look inside the vehicle before entering. Enter your vehicle as quickly as possible.

- When parking at night, park in a well-lighted area.
- Be alert when putting packages in your vehicle. Be aware of anyone watching you. If someone approaches you and you feel threatened get in your car and lock the doors until the person leaves the area. If the person does not leave, drive away.
- Return to your vehicle periodically to check on it. Do not carry so many packages at one time that you cannot react quickly.
- Move your vehicle to a different parking spot after putting packages in it.



Shopping Online

- Use only reputable companies and websites that have proper security features. Secure sites have an address that begins with HTTPS://. Beware of pop-ups ads that lead you to another website or ask you personal information or account numbers.

ALARMING HOLIDAY Facts & Figures



☀ Between 2006–2010, U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 230 home fires that started with Christmas trees per year. These fires caused an average of 4 deaths, 21 injuries, and \$17.3 million in direct property damage annually.

☀ Christmas tree fires are not common, but when they occur, they are likely to be serious. On average, one of every 66 reported fires that began with a Christmas tree resulted in death.

☀ A heat source too close to the Christmas tree started one of every five (18%) of these fires.

- Do not give out your Social Security number, e-mail address, telephone number, or address unless you know who is collecting the information, why they are collecting it, and how they'll use it.
- Save all transaction information.

Holiday Safety doesn't end with shopping smarts, it is equally as important to remember the following general tips.

Selecting a Tree for the Holidays

Needles on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull back from the branches, and the needles should not break if the tree has been freshly cut. The trunk should be sticky to the touch. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on the



ground. If many needles fall off, the tree has been cut too long and, has probably dried out, and is a fire hazard.

Christmas Tree Safety

- Natural trees should be cut at a 45 degree angle at the base and placed in water.



- Place tree away from sources of heat.
- Use only non-flammable decorations.
- Use only lighting evaluated by a nationally recognized laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- Inspect lights for frayed wire or other defects before use.
- Do not leave lights on unattended.
- Keep natural tree stands filled with water at all times.
- When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly.

Fire Safety Tips

The use of holiday decorations such as Christmas trees, garlands, electric lights and candles can increase the incidence of holiday fires. Following a few simple fire safety tips can help ensure that you and your loved ones have a fire-safe holiday season:

- Candle Care: Consider using battery operated flameless candles, which can look, smell and feel like real candles. If you do use lit candles, make sure they are in stable holders, and place

them where they cannot be knocked down easily.

- Holiday Lighting: Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet.
- Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace opening, to prevent embers or sparks from jumping out, unwanted material from going in, and help prevent the possibility of burns to occupants.
- Have the chimney inspected annually and cleaned if necessary, especially if it has not been used for some time.



- Do not use flammable liquids to start or accelerate any fire.

For more information on important Safety Tips, visit cityofnovi.org. Keeping you and your family safe is our top priority.