

MSU - Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION SERVICE

Christmas
Holiday Safety

Well, would you believe that here we are at another Christmas season almost upon us. Where did 2016 get off to?

So with Christmas season almost here we need to look at all the aspects of the holidays that will keep us out of "harm's way" so that we can really enjoy the season.

The most important item is for all us to be cognizant of the "reason for the season" which is the birth of Jesus and we shall be reverent for this joyous occasion. However, we can still enjoy the season and honor him with staying focused on being safe and helping our relatives and friends to do the same. So, let's look at safety tips to help us stay safe and to enjoy this coming season:

CHRISTMAS TREES-

- Purchase green trees-disregard to the brown or brittle ones. Check the needs to see if they bend or break.
- As you prepare the tree, cut off a slice of the bottom to expose a fresh bottom, which will soak up the water better. Check the water daily.
- Locate the tree away from ignition sources, such as fireplaces, portable heaters, live candles, etc.
- Make sure that you have a steady base for the tree.
- If you chose to buy an artificial tree, make sure it is approved by a certified laboratory, such as Underwriters laboratories (UL).

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS & EXTENSION CORDS-

- Avoid using extension cords, if possible. If you have to use them, be sure that they are heavy enough to carry the load and also are approved by a certified laboratory.
- Do not overload your circuits. Use surge protectors if you need multiple outlets.
- Replace broken or burned out bulbs immediately.
- Refrain from running cords under doorways or hallways with doors. The swinging action could cause frays in the cords, making it a potential shock hazard.

TOYS & ORNAMENTS-

- Purchase ornaments that are appropriate for your child's age. Buying toys for older kids may cause an injury with the younger ones.
- Refrain from buying toys with sharp edges, corners, strings, cords and parts small enough that they might swallow them'
- Place older ornaments with lead paint out of the reach of small children and pets.

PARTIES- DO NOT DRINK AND DRIVE!!!

- If you drink-don't drive)
- Avoid live candles drive-check your ashtrays periodically for live ashes.
- After the party go out again and check the cigarette receptacles for live ashes.

SHOPPING-

Christmas shopping is a special time of the year. Folks are switching their coattails (as my sister use to say) getting their gifts, food stuffs etc. ready for the season.

- Try to shop during the daylight ours. If you do shop at night, try to have a buddy or friend with you.
- Dress casual and comfortable. Avoid wearing expensive jewelry and avoid carrying a purse or wallet, if possible.

- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. Use plastic as much as possible. In lieu of cash. Do have your drivers' license and ID with you. Carry these along with cash in your front pockets. Good advice for men and women too that are wearing slacks.
- Place your purchases in your trunk or in the back of your SUV, to avoid being so conspicuous.
- Avoid overloading yourself with packages so that you don't have clear vision when walking or returning to your vehicle.
- If you are approached by a "thief," he probably only wants your purse, so throw it in the opposite direction of where opposite directions he is standing and you run like the "dickens" in the other direction. Chances are he only wants money.
- When you are a safe distance from him, start hollering and screaming as loud as you can for police or security help.
- Be cognizant of your surroundings in parking lots. Look closely around your vehicle for suspicious vehicles, especially vans or SUVs. Thieves like to park close to a suspect culprit for easy prey. When leaving a shopping area and if you see a stranger, immediately return to the shopping area and look for a policeman or security person to escort you back to your vehicle or wait until the suspect leaves the area.
- As you return to your vehicle, look in the back seat, floorboard and front area to be sure that no one is inside.
- Have your keys ready so that you can enter your vehicle, lock the doors and leave fast as you can.
- Night Shopping – Always look for a well -lighted parking area.
- Always try to park as close as possible to the area where you will be shopping.

SHOPPING WITH CHILDREN-

- When and if possible, leave your small children with parents or relatives.
- Teach your children that if they get lost or separated from you to go to a store clerk. Also teach them to stay close to you at all times when shopping. Don't allow them to go to a restroom without you standing close by.
- Teach them to know your home phone numbers or other numbers in case emergency contact is needed.

ATM SAFETY-

- As mentioned, use debit or credit cards when possible. Keep them in your front pockets or other secure places on your person for security.
- If you have to draw out money at night –go to a well-lit ATM facility with a relative or buddy for extra security. Memorize your pin number to avoid wasting time trying to dig in your purse or wallet for the card and number.
- If you see individuals "hanging out" around ATM machines, find another machine or wait until they leave to do your business.
- Once you finish your transaction-close your window, lock your doors and drive off.

Thieves or potential thieves have no consciences. Their motive is to get from you anything that they can, in any way they can. For your safety and sake, use any means possible to avoid their apprehension and loss of your goods, finances, and possibly your health.

**BE SAFE-NOT SORRY
THE LIFE YOU SAVE
COULD BE YOURS OR A RELATIVE**

SAFE TODAY<>>ALIVE TOMORROW

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