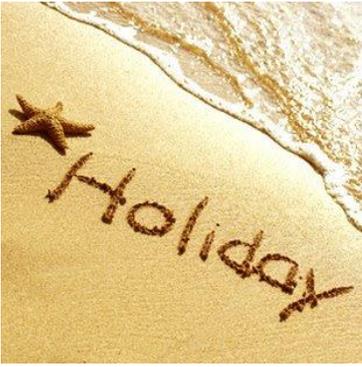


Holiday Safety Tips



The Hermosa Beach Police Department would like to help you shop safely this holiday season by sharing these safety tips provided by The National Crime Prevention Council, the organization best known for its icon, McGruff the Crime Dog.

Shopping in Stores

- Do not buy more than you can carry. Plan ahead by taking a friend with you or ask a store employee to help you carry your packages to the car.
- Save all receipts. Print and save all confirmations from your online

purchases. Start a file folder to keep all receipts together and to help you verify credit card or bank statements as they come in.

- Consider alternate options to pay for your merchandise, such as onetime or multiuse disposable credit cards or money orders, at online stores and auction sites.
- Wait until asked before taking out your credit card or checkbook. An enterprising thief would love to shoulder surf to get your account information.
- Tell a security guard or store employee if you see an unattended bag or package. The same applies if you are using mass transit.

Walking to and From Your Car

- Deter pickpockets. Carry your purse close to your body or your wallet inside a coat or front trouser pocket.
- Have your keys in hand when approaching your vehicle. Check the back seat and around the car before getting in.
- Do not leave packages visible in your car windows. Lock them in the trunk or, if possible, take them directly home.



Shopping with Small Children

- If you are shopping with children, make a plan in case you are separated from each other.
- Select a central meeting place.
- Teach them to know they can ask mall personnel or store security employees if they need help.

Shopping Online

- Before surfing the Internet, secure your personal computers by updating your security software. Everyone's computer should have anti-virus, anti-spyware, and anti-spam software, as well as a good firewall installed. Visit www.bytecrime.org for free software downloads.
- Keep your personal information private and your password secure. Do not respond to requests to "verify" your password or credit card information unless you initiated the contact. Legitimate businesses will not contact you in this manner.
- Beware of "bargains" from companies with whom you are unfamiliar—if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!
- Use secure websites for purchases. Look for the icon of a locked padlock at the bottom of the screen or "https" in the URL address.
- Shop with companies you know and trust. Check for background information if you plan to buy from a new or unfamiliar company.

To find more useful shopping tips and personal safety information, visit the National Crime Prevention Council's [website](#). And remember, if you see something, say something! Report suspicious activity calling 310-524-2750, or 9-1-1.