

Holiday Safety Tips When You Head To The Mall

The holiday shopping season is here and millions of people will be heading to the nation's shopping malls focused on finding the perfect gifts, but crime isn't taking a holiday.

Police departments across the country report increased calls during the holiday season when

shoppers tend to think less about holiday shopping mall safety and more about buying presents.

Shopping mall safety is especially important this holiday season when malls are more vulnerable to violent crime, according to Patrick Fiel, public safety advisor for ADT Security Services.

Fiel said, "It's never possible to completely eliminate the risk of violence, but being aware of your surroundings and choosing to shop at malls that take security seriously are two important things you can do to help protect yourself and your family against violence while shopping this season."

To help make shopping at the mall safer for you and your family, Fiel suggests the following tips:

- Park in a well-lit area as close to your destination as possible.

Parking lots and structures are typically the most dangerous places at the mall.

If you are shopping alone and feel uncomfortable walking to your car at night, ask mall security officers for an escort.

Consider valet parking during the holiday season when many malls offer free or reduced price valet parking.

Look for security cameras and try to park near them.

Also, opt for walkways leading to malls and parking lots that have security cameras installed.

- Choose to do your holiday shopping at malls that take security seriously.

Shopping destinations with regular mall security patrols and visible surveillance cameras provide an added layer of security and a deterrent to criminals.

- Avoid using restrooms that are tucked away in a back area of a mall or store department.

If you can, find a restroom near the mall's food court or other well-trafficked area and always accompany your child.

- Don't overload yourself with packages. Thieves are always on the lookout for people who might be distracted, keep track of your packages and try to stay off your cell phone.

Hold your purse close to your body or use a front pocket if carrying a wallet.

- Always know where the closest exits are located. In case of a fire or other emergency, make sure you can find the nearest exits and remember to avoid using elevators in an emergency.

- Take extra care when returning to your car.

If you notice anyone suspicious in the parking area you can use your keys as a weapon.

If needed, you can also use your car's alarm system by pushing the panic button on your alarm remote control or car horn to draw attention.

"Being extra vigilant this holiday season will help keep you from becoming a crime victim," said Fiel.

"Always trust your instincts and report any and all suspicious activity to shopping mall security officers or your local police.

Reporting suspicious activity today will help keep your mall safer tomorrow."

Chamber Hosting "Spirit of Christmas" Sing-A-Long

The Eagle Lake Chamber of Commerce would like to invite the community to participate in the first Eagle Lake Community "Spirit of Christmas" Sing-A-Long.

The Eagle Lake Community "Spirit of Christmas" Sing-A-Long will be lead by Chamber Director, Mary Parr.

Ms. Parr has previous experience in working with children, youth and adult choirs and is excited to have the opportunity to have a fun time celebrating this time of year with you in song.

Whether you are young, old, rich or poor, need to sit or want to stand, think you can sing or know that you can't, live in or outside of town, any-

one and everyone is welcome.

The "Sing-A-Long Group" will be singing at the entrance of the Chamber's "Christmas Mall" on Saturday, December 12 at 10 a.m. when the doors open.

If the group is interested, all can reconvene to sing before and/or after the parade and also go caroling throughout Eagle Lake before the Christmas holiday.

Practice sessions will be held at the Chamber office, 303 East Main Street, three separate times during the week to allow flexibility of those who may have scheduling conflicts and want to participate.

Individuals are only asked to attend the practice time that fits their schedule. They are not required to

come to all three practices.

Practices are:

Tuesday's (Nov. 24; Dec. 1, 8) at 2 p.m.;

Thursdays (Nov. 19; Dec. 3) at 7 p.m.

Sundays (Nov 22, 29; Dec. 6) at 2 p.m.

There will be a final practice for everyone involved on Thursday, December 10 at 7 p.m.

For more information or to sign-up to sing, please call, visit or email the Chamber of Commerce, 303 East Main Street, Eagle Lake, Texas 77434, 979-234-2780 or info@VisitEagleLake.com. More information can be found at www.VisitEagleLake.com.

Christmas Parade Slated For the Garwood/Nada Area

The Garwood Gadabouts encourage any Garwood/Nada homes or businesses interested in entering the Christmas Decorating Contest to pick up entry forms at any Nada/Garwood area business.

Deadline to enter is Decem-

ber 1.

Also the first annual Garwood Lighted Parade will be held December 5.

Forms are available for any individuals, businesses, organizations,

etc., interested in participating.

Please pick up at any area Nada/Garwood business, or call (979) 758-3791. **Deadline to enter is December 1.**

Any and all entries will be accepted!

Make Your Christmas Tree Safe

What would Christmas be without the family gathered around the tree to open presents?

Christmas trees are a symbol of the holiday and a major focus of seasonal decorating.

Not only do they fill your house with an inviting pine scent, Christmas trees act as a focal and gathering point for the family.

When you purchase your Christmas tree from a vendor or cut your own, heed the important advice to keep it well watered.

This will help maintain its fresh fragrance and deep color through the holiday, as well as prevent it from becoming a fire hazard.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, a department of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Christmas trees account for more than 400 fires annually, resulting in deaths, injuries and millions of dollars in home damage.

Typically these fires are started by shorts in the electrical system of tree lights, candle flames, or

matches and lighters ignited near tree limbs.

Well-watered trees can fend off a fire. Dry, neglected trees have the propensity to go up like a torch.

It takes only seconds for a tree fire to spread to uncontrollable levels.

To prevent the possibility of fire in your home, play it safe with your tree:

- * Keep the pine tree stand filled with water, daily.

- * Inspect electrical lines for shorts or frayed wiring.

- * Do not use lit candles on your tree — you're asking for trouble.

- * Keep open flames, cigarettes and other fire-inducing objects away from the tree.

- * Place your tree away from radiators, heaters or fireplaces so it won't dry out as quickly or catch fire.

- * If your tree already shows signs of dryness, remove it from your house.

Helpful Baking Hints

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serves to a simple mix to lend any cake a holiday theme.

- * Chocolate curls are the ultimate edible garnish. To make them, run a sharp vegetable peeler in one long stroke over the top of a bar or square of chocolate.

The longer the stroke and the warmer the chocolate, the more elegant the curl.

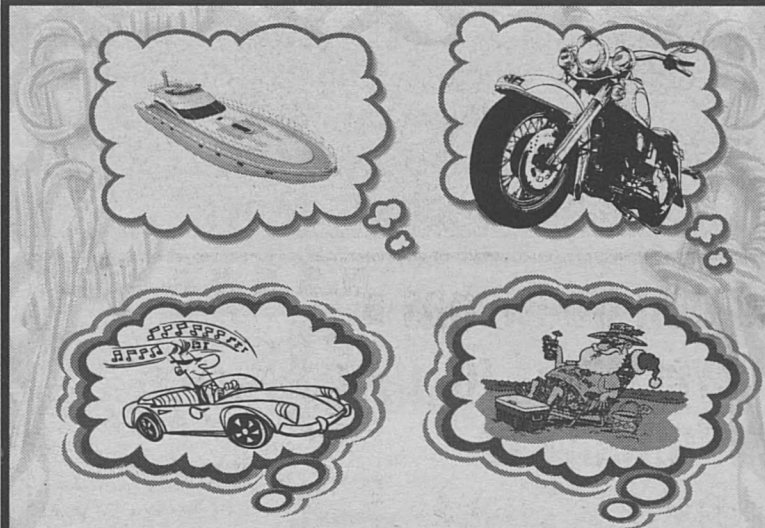
- * Top white or angel food cakes with shredded coconut.

Tint it a festive color by shaking it in a plastic bag with a few drops of food coloring.

- * Dust cocoa powder, cinnamon or confectioners sugar over a cake using a fine mesh sieve.

Get creative and sprinkle on patterns and designs using stencils.

- * You can use milk, buttermilk, orange juice or even brewed coffee instead of water in cake mixes.



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