



# MAFES Dawg Tracks

December 17, 2012



Christmas Holiday Shopping



Christmas shopping is at full-throttle now, and with our Holidays fast approaching, I have an idea that it will get more intense as we get closer to the big day.

Along with tips, that if heeded, will help you make it through the shopping season with no major security risks or incidents, we all need to remember that this season is for family's visits, and church activities. But **most of all** it is for us to celebrate the birth of The man that has provided us with our respective qualities of life, family and our pursuit of happiness with Him the center of our lives.

Each year we hear or read about friends or families that have experienced losses from different types of thefts from cars while shopping to break-ins at home. Following are some tips that, hopefully, will eliminate or reduce the possibility of this happening to you, your family or friends:

- ✓ Even though you are rushed to get all your shopping done, stay alert of your surroundings.
- ✓ Dress casually and comfortably.
- ✓ Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- ✓ Carry only your debit/credit cards needed for the day's purchases. Keep a record of the card numbers in your home.
- ✓ If by chance you have a card stolen, or even surmise that it might be, notify the issuer immediately.
- ✓ Do not carry large amounts of cash.
- ✓ Keep the cash that you have in your front pocket.
- ✓ Place your purchases in the trunk so they can't be seen by would-be thieves.
- ✓ Park in well-lit areas and be double sure that you lock your vehicle.
- ✓ Park as close as possible to your destination for shopping and take notice of where you are.
- ✓ Avoid overloading yourself with a lot of packages so that you can maintain clear visibility and freedom of motion - even though you may have to make multiple trips to your vehicle.
- ✓ Beware of strangers approaching for any reason. Con-artists will try any type of scam to get your attention to try to steal your purse or wallet, if they can.
- ✓ If by chance you are cornered by a "would-be thief," throw your purse in the opposite direction of where he is standing and run like the devil in the other direction and hollow if necessary. There is a strong possibility that he only wants your purse and not you. When you are safe alert the police or security.
- ✓ Keep all vehicle doors and windows locked when you are in or out of the vehicle. Set your alarm or use an anti-theft device for added security.

- ✓ Avoid parking next to vans, campers or pickups with camper shells.
- ✓ Never leave your vehicle running while unattended or with children inside.
- ✓ Keep a secure hold on your purse and parcels when you are returning to your vehicle. Refrain from placing your purse or packages on the top of your vehicle. A potential thief could pop up from between vehicles and attempt to apprehend you and/or steal your purchases and your purse.
- ✓ Get your keys out and have them ready before you reach your vehicle, for obvious reasons. Before entering take a look inside the car for a suspected "visitor."
- ✓ Do not approach your vehicle if you see suspicious looking people in that area. Return to the mall and ask a security officer to accompany you to your vehicle.

### SHOPPING MALL TIPS-

- ✓ Inside a mall - avoid dark hallways or back door areas, especially near closing time.
- ✓ Avoid mall bathrooms that are tucked away out of the main stream of traffic. Locate one in well-traveled areas of the mall.
- ✓ Do not use a video arcade or toy store as a baby sitter. Predators look in these areas for unattended youth. According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCME), 100,000 children are abducted each year, often in malls and department stores.

### ATM SAFETY-

- ✓ Debit and credit cards were mentioned above, but additionally, you should guard your cards with the same prudence that you would your cash. Keep them in a safe and secure place. Also, memorize your PIN number so that you don't have to "fiddle" in your purse looking for it and also be as private as possible to avoid a bystander getting your PIN.
- ✓ If you withdraw money after dark, try to do so in a well-lit area, and for added security, it would be good to have someone accompany you.
- ✓ If you see an individual or individuals hanging around the ATM, go to another or wait until you are certain that they are gone.
- ✓ Spend as little amount of time as possible at the machine. You might consider driving away from the machine with all doors and windows locked to verify your withdrawal and to put away your "plastic." While at the ATM machine, beware of your surroundings and don't leave the receipt in the machine. It's also good to hold the receipts so that you can compare them to your bank statement at the end of the month.

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Excerpts: [www.flhsmv.gov](http://www.flhsmv.gov)  
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**CHANCE TAKERS ARE ACCIDENT  
MAKERS**

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**INVEST IN TOMORROW-  
PRACTICE SAFETY TODAY!!**