



# MAFES Dawg Tracks

December 7, 2015



*Safety Tips:*  
**Christmas Holiday Safety**



It's hard to imagine or realize that another Christmas season is upon us. Where has 2015 gone? Seems like we just returned from the 2014 Holiday. Oh well! Let's start thinking about safety for this 2015 season.

### Did you know that?

- Between 2007 and 2011, U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 230 home fires per year that started with Christmas trees. The results were: 6 deaths, 22 injuries, and \$18.3 million in direct property damages annually.
- An average of 1 out of every 40 reported home fires that began with a Christmas tree resulted in a death - compared to an average of 1 death per 142 total reported home fires.
- Electrical problems were factors in one-third (or 32%) of home Christmas tree structure fires.
- 2 of every 5 (or 39%) home Christmas tree fires started in the living room, family room or den.

Taking great care in decorating and maintaining your Christmas tree can help make your Christmas season safer and more enjoyable!!

### CHRISTMAS TREES-

- ✓ If you are purchasing, or already have an artificial tree, make sure that it is an approved model from a certified laboratory that is certified fire retardant.
- ✓ For real trees- purchase only green, moist trees- not ones that are brittle or old. Check the needles to make sure that they bend and don't break.
- ✓ Cut off a few inches off the bottom to have new wood that will absorb the water better. Check the water daily.
- ✓ Make sure that you have a steady base for the tree.
- ✓ Always locate your tree away from ignition sources, such as: fireplaces, space heaters, candles, etc.

### CHRISTMAS LIGHTS & EXTENSION CORDS-

- ✓ Use only UL or FM approved extension cords and check that the cords are heavy enough to carry the load. The thicker the cord the heavier load that it will accommodate with overheating.
- ✓ Do not overload outlets- use surge protectors if more outlets are needed.
- ✓ Replace broken bulbs immediately that have exposed filaments.
- ✓ Refrain from running cords under doorways or hallways with doors that could ultimately cause the cords to fray.

### TOYS & ORNAMENTS-

- ✓ Purchase toys for your kids that are appropriate for their age. Buying toys that are intended for older kids could result in an injury.
- ✓ Toys with sharp points, strings, cords or parts small enough to be swallowed should not be given to small kids.

### PARTIES-

- ✓ Do not ever drink & drive!!!
- ✓ Provide non-alcoholic drinks for designated drivers and other guests.
- ✓ Avoid live candles at parties, and if smoking is allowed, have plenty of ashtrays placed around the home. Check them periodically during the party for careless smokers and smoldering butts. After the party, go around emptying the ashtrays in an incinerated container.

### HOLIDAY SHOPPING TIPS-

- ✓ Christmas seasons are special. Folks are hustling and busting around, the time is futile for shopping and preparing for family and friendly parties. We must be extra careful during these times to avoid losing focus on safety and security. During this special time, we must take extra care in remaining cognizant of all the aspects of safety and security.

### SHOPPING SAFETY TIPS-

**The points we shall discuss are aimed toward to the Holiday season, but apply to all times and types of shopping;**

- Shop during daylight hours- if you have to shop at night, do so with a friend or a "buddy."
- Dress casually and comfortably. Avoid expensive jewelry and carrying a purse or wallet.
- Place your purchases in the back of your vehicle where they aren't so conspicuous.
- Avoid carrying too much of a load when walking. It tends to obstruct your vision.
- If you are approached by a "suspect" thief and he wants your purse- throw it in the opposite direction from where he is standing - and you run like the devil in the opposite direction from him. Chances are he wants your money, not you.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash- use plastic as much as you can. Remember to have your drivers' license or other ID with you. Carry your cash and identification in your front pocket.
- Be cognizant of your surroundings in a parking lot. Watch for strangers in vans, SUVs or other vehicles parked close to you. Thieves like to park close to a suspect culprit that could be easy prey.
- When you are leaving a shopping area returning to your car, if you notice a stranger lurking close to you, return to the shopping area and seek the help of a policeman or security officer to accompany you to your vehicle.
- Have your keys in your hand as you approach your vehicle- unlock the vehicle, load your articles, and get in the vehicle, lock the doors and "get out of dodge." Don't linger in the parking lot.
- As you return to your vehicle after a shopping spree, be sure to lock in the back and front seat and floorboards to be sure that no one has entered your car, awaiting for you to return to rob or an attempt to molest you.
- Night parking - always try to part in a well-lit parking area and as close to your shopping destination as possible.

### SHOPPING WITH CHILDREN-

- ✓ When possible, leave small kids with a friend, sitter or relative.
- ✓ Teach your kids to go to a store clerk if they get separated from you. Don't allow them to go to a restroom unless you can be close by.
- ✓ Teach your kids the home address and phone numbers so that they can give them to the police or security if they get lost.

### ATM SHOPPING SAFETY TIPS-

- ✓ Use plastic whenever it is possible - protect them as you would cash.
- ✓ If you have to withdraw cash at night - do it at a well-lit ATM facility. Memorize your pin number to avoid wasting more time at the ATM.
- ✓ Once you finish your transaction, close your window, lock the door and leave.
- ✓ If you notice individuals "hanging" around the ATM facility, leave and find another or wait until this one is clear.

**STAY ALERT WHEN SHOPPING-  
THIEVES CAN EMPTY YOUR POCKETS AND  
HARM YOU!  
PRACTICE GOOD SHOPPING HABITS  
TO AVOID MONETARY LOSSES  
OR POTENTIAL PERSONAL INJURY!!**

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Excerpts: [www.nfpa.org/safety](http://www.nfpa.org/safety)

[www.cbcemd.edu/publicsafety/holiday\\_safety](http://www.cbcemd.edu/publicsafety/holiday_safety)

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