

Cumberland County Sheriff's Office

HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS



General Holiday Safety Tips

- **The holiday season is a time for giving, sharing and enjoying family and friends. Unfortunately, it's also a favored season for criminals, who have an expanded pool of targets carrying extra money with lowered awareness.**
- **There are ways to protect yourself and to lessen your chances of a crime happening to you.**

General Holiday Safety Tips Continued

- **Stay alert.**
- **Keep your mind on your surroundings, who's in front of you and who's behind you. Don't get distracted.**
- **Walk purposefully, stand tall, and make eye contact with people around you.**
- **TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS.** If you feel uncomfortable in a situation leave.



Personal Holiday Safety Tips



- Make yourself a “tough target.”
- Don’t think that it can’t happen to you.
- Should you resist? Everyone and every situation is different.
- Always be aware of your surroundings.
- If being followed or stalked, call 911 or drive directly to a police station.
- Shop with friends or relatives if possible; there is safety in numbers

Personal Holiday Safety Tips

Continued

- If you are physically attacked keep your head. Stay as calm as possible and evaluate your options and resources.
- It may be more advisable to submit than to resist and risk injury or death. You will have to make this decision based on the circumstances. Don't resist if the attacker has a weapon.
- Keep assessing the situation as it is happening. If one strategy doesn't work, try another. Possible options include negotiating, stalling for time, distracting the assailant and fleeing to a safe place, verbal assertiveness, screaming, and physical resistance.
- You may be able to turn the attacker off with unusual behavior such as throwing up, acting crazy, or stating you have a sexually transmitted disease.

Holiday Shopping With Children



- **Keep a close eye on your children while shopping. Teach your children to go to a store clerk or security guard if they ever get separated from you in a store/mall. Be sure they know their first and last name so they can tell someone who they are.**
- **It is best to keep children under the age of four (4) in a stroller.**

Holiday Traveling Safety Tips



- **Keep your car in good condition with the gas tank at least half full.**
- **Park in well-lighted areas and lock your doors, no matter how long you'll be gone.**
- **Never leave your car running while unoccupied.**
- **Put valuables out of sight or in the trunk.**
- **Check front and rear seats, and floorboards before entering your car.**
- **Drive with all doors locked and windows rolled up.**

Holiday Traveling Safety Tips Continued

- **Never pick up hitchhikers.**
- **If your car breaks down, put the hood up, lock the doors, turn on the flashers, and move to the passenger seat. Do not leave your car. If someone stops to help, roll down the window slightly and ask them to call the police or a tow truck.**
- **Avoid underground and enclosed parking garages if possible.**
- **When parking or returning to your vehicle, carry your keys and be aware of your surroundings.**
- **Consider investing in a cellular telephone.**
- **If signaled to stop by any vehicle other than a clearly marked law enforcement unit, acknowledge the signal, and wave the driver to follow you to a safe location (where there are other people and that is well lighted). Drive within the speed limit and take the shortest possible route to the nearest safe place. If you have a cellular phone, dial 9-1-1, tell the call taker you are being followed by an unmarked vehicle attempting to stop you, and ask them to send a marked law enforcement vehicle to your location.**

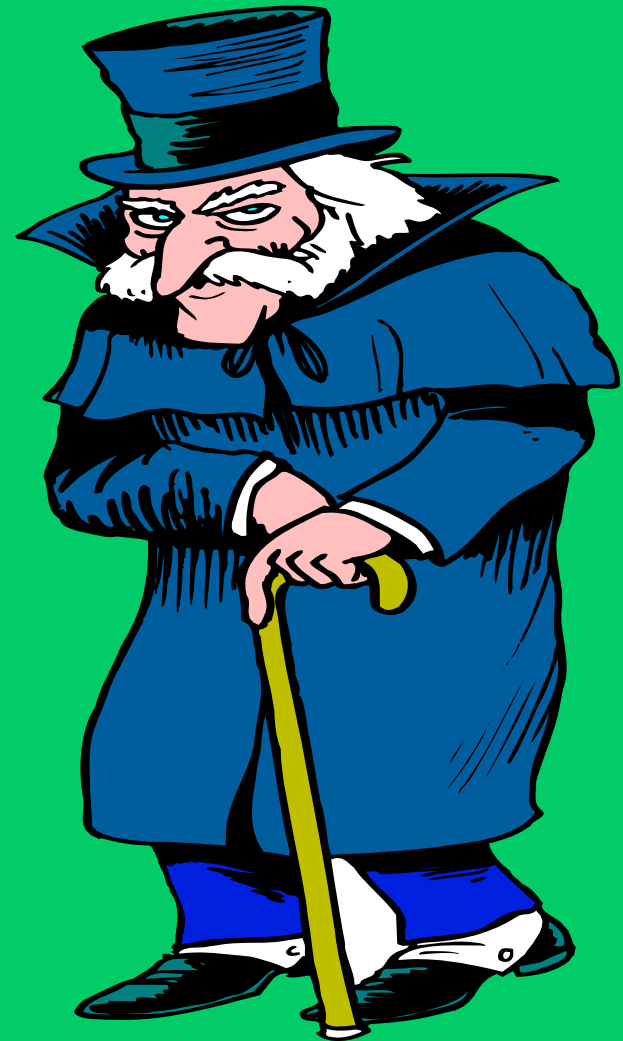
Public Transportation

- Try to use well-lit and frequently used stops.
- Try to sit near the driver or conductor.
- Avoid sitting near exits. An attacker can reach in and grab a purse or jewelry as the bus or subway pulls away.
- Be alert to who gets off the bus or subway with you. If you feel uncomfortable, walk directly to a place where there are other people.



Elevators

- **Look in the elevator before getting in.**
- **Stand near the controls.**
- **Get off if someone suspicious enters. If you're worried about someone who is waiting for the elevator with you, pretend you forgot something and don't get on.**
- **If you are attacked, hit the alarm and as many floor buttons as possible.**



Home Safety Tips



- **Good locks, simple precautions, neighborhood awareness, and common sense can help prevent most property crimes.**
- **Install and use good deadbolt locks in your doors (about half of all burglars enter through unlocked doors and windows).**
- **Secure sliding glass doors with locks or a rigid wooden dowel wedged in the track.**
- **Lock double-hung windows by sliding a bolt or nail into a hold drilled at a downward angle through the top of each sash and into the frame.**
- **Trim back shrubbery hiding doors or windows. Cut back tree limbs that could help a thief climb to second story windows**

Home Safety Tips

Continued

- **Make sure all porches, entrances, and yards are well lighted.**
- **Maintain the neighborhood. Dark alleys, litter, and rundown areas attract criminals.**
- **Do not hide house keys in mail boxes, planters, or under doormats.**
- **Do not put personal identification on key rings.**
- **Leave only your ignition key with mechanics or parking attendants.**
- **Install a peephole in all entry doors so you can see who is outside without opening the door.**
- **Do not trust door chains. They can be easily broken.**
- **Don't open the door to anyone you don't know. Insist service personnel verify their identity before allowing them in.**

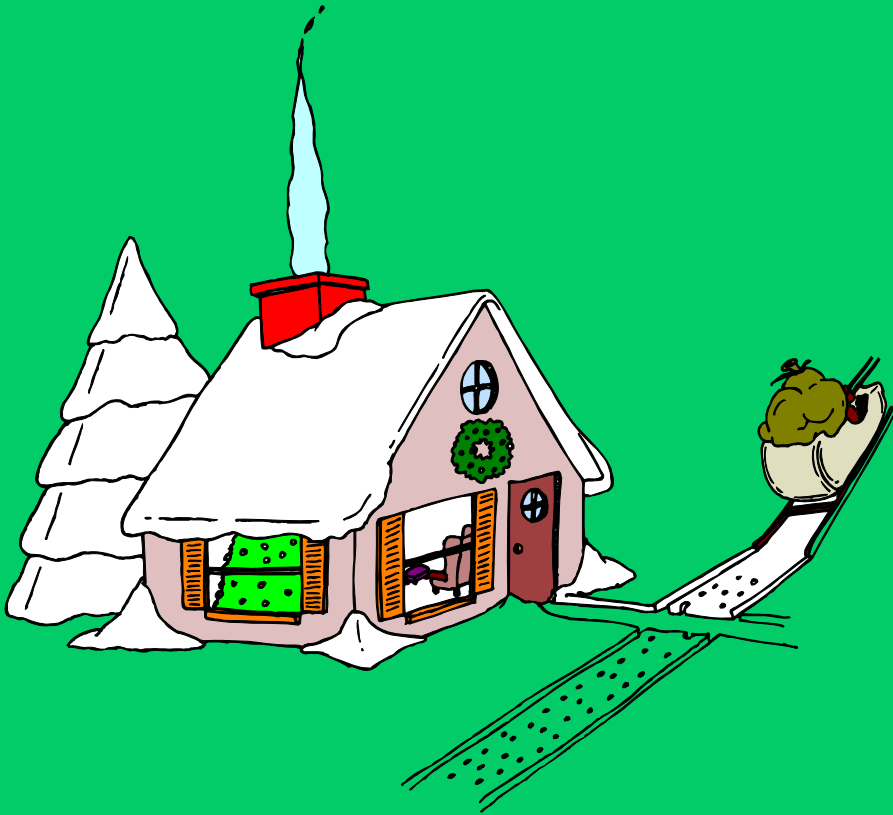
Home Safety Tips

Continued



- **Don't give any information to "wrong number" callers.**
- **Check references of any person calling about a survey or credit check before offering information.**
- **Hang up immediately on threatening or harassing calls.**

Home Safety Tips Continued



- **Make your home appear occupied when you go out.**
- **Leave lights on and the radio or television on.**
- **Keep your garage door closed and locked.**
- **Use timing devices to turn inside lights on and off.**
- **If you will be gone several days, arrange to have the mail and papers stopped or picked up.**

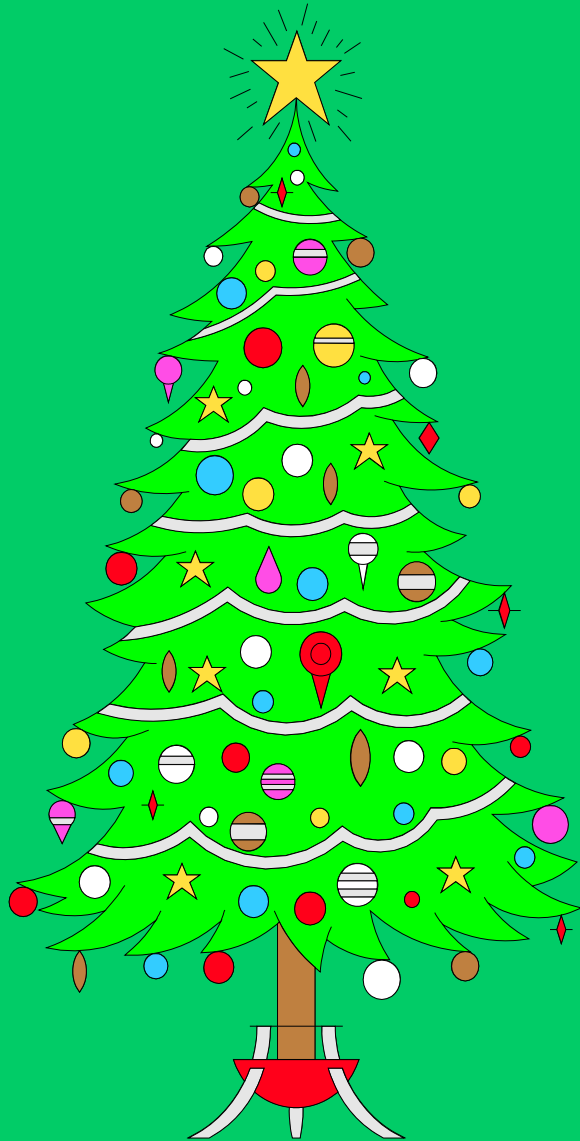
Home Safety Tips Continued



- **Do not throw away boxes in plain view (curb side) that will let everyone know what you got for the Holidays such as television, stereo, play station boxes etc.**
- **Tear them up and place them in a dark colored trash bag.**

Home Holiday Safety Decorating Tips

Tree Safety



- **Fresh Trees** – When selecting your tree, make sure to shake the tree vigorously and watch for excessive loss of needles. If the tree loses a lot of needles, it's already drying out, and a dry tree significantly increases the risk of the tree catching fire in your home. Fresh trees should be green and the needles should be difficult to pull from the branches.
- Once you've selected a fresh tree and get it home, secure it in a sturdy stand and provide it with adequate water. At holiday time, many stores carry products designed to help you keep track of when your tree needs water. Keeping your tree well-watered will keep it supple so it retains its needles, making for less cleanup after the holiday and a lesser fire danger.

Tree Safety Continued

- **Artificial Trees** - If you're about to buy an artificial tree, the most important things to look for is the 'Fire Resistant' label. This means the tree has been treated with a chemical that makes it resist burning. It does not mean the tree can't, or won't, catch on fire. If your tree is metallic, don't use electric lights on it, use spotlights for illumination.
- **Greens** – Evergreen cuttings may be used in limited quantities, but keep greens away from heat sources and don't smoke near trees or greens.
- **Tree Lighting** – Decorate the tree first, and then plug in the lights last. Try and insure your lamps/bulbs don't touch the tree or other decorations. Turn off or unplug your indoor holiday lighting whenever that area of the house is unattended.
- **Live Trees & Greens Removal** – Live trees and greens should be removed as soon as practical after the holiday for which they were used.

Indoor Holiday Safety Decorating Tips

- **Buy/Use only lighting sets and extension cords that bear the “Underwriters’ Laboratories” or “Factory Mutual” label and are specifically marked for indoor use.**
- **Make certain you take time to unroll/untangle and inspect each set of lights, new or old, for worn insulation, bare/frayed wires, lights with broken/cracked sockets, and loose connections. If you find broken strings, do not try to repair the string, throw it away and replace it.**
- **Be careful not to overload electrical outlets. Never string more than three sets of lights per single extension cord.**



Indoor Holiday Safety Decorating Tips Continued

- **Protect the electrical wires from damage. Don't run lights/wires behind drapes, under carpet, through doorways, or where they will be walked on. Don't use nails or tacks to hang wires.**
- **Always unplug lights before replacing lights or fuses.**
- **Remember to always look for the manufacturer's recommendations on the number of lights strings that can be strung together and other precautions listed on the packaging for the lights.**

Last But Not Least



**DON'T
DRINK
AND
DRIVE**

Happy Holidays

