

This month's column comes from the Prattville Police Department's Investigations Division.

## Holiday Shopping Safety Tips



### Home Safety

- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave the house, even if you will only be gone for a minute.
- Don't put large displays of holiday gifts in view of your windows or doors.
- When going on trips or out for evenings, use automatic timers to turn indoor lights on and off to make it appear you are home.
- Immediately after the holidays, mark new gifts with your driver's license or social security number.
- Don't advertise what you got for Christmas by putting the boxes out on trash day. Break the boxes down or take them to the dump yourself.

### Shopping Safety

- Lock packages in the trunk.
- Don't overload yourself with packages.
- If you must shop in the evening, shop with a friend.
- Park in well-lighted areas, as close as possible to store entrances. Be particularly aware of persons in the parking lot, especially near your car.
- Lock your car and make sure the windows are closed.
- Carry only the charge cards you will need. Don't carry or flash large sums of cash.
- Carry your purse next to your body with the purse flap against you. Men should carry their wallets in front or inside pockets.
- Be aware of your surroundings and the people around you. Don't allow your attention to become distracted from your purse or packages.
- Teach children to go to a store clerk or security guard and ask for help if you become separated in a store or shopping mall.
- Don't hesitate to notify store security if you see suspicious activity.
- If you have to wait for a ride, wait in a busy, well-lighted place.
- If you are a victim of a crime, report it to police immediately.

**Follow these helpful tips for a safe and happy holiday season!**