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TPD Offers Holiday Tips for a Safe Season

The following holiday safety tips were compiled to help ensure a safe and secure holiday season. The holidays are a special time of year, but are also a time when busy people become vulnerable to theft and other holiday crimes. Please share this information with family, friends and neighbors. The Taylor Police Department wishes you a safe and peaceful holiday season.



Shopping Safety

- Shop before dark if possible. If you must shop at night, go with someone else.
- Dress casually and comfortably and avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- Always carry your Michigan Drivers License or Identification Card with you.
- Even though you're rushed, stay alert to your surroundings.
- Don't carry a lot of cash, and keep it in your front pocket.
- Pay with a check or credit card when possible.
- Notify the credit card company if your credit card is lost or stolen.
- Record your credit card numbers in a safe place at home.
- Be extra cautious if you do carry a wallet or purse.
- Don't overload yourself with packages so you have clear visibility and freedom of motion to avoid mishaps.
- Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason. "Con-artists" may try to distract you to take your money or belongings.
- If you use an ATM, choose one that is located inside a police station, mall, or well-lighted location.
- Withdraw only the amount of cash you need.
- Protect your PIN by shielding the ATM keypad from anyone who is near you.
- Do not throw your ATM receipt away at the ATM location.
- Never stand and count your money.
- Remember to take your ATM card with you when you are done.

Keeping Kids Safe During This Busy Time



“Children should never be left in a car alone. It only takes a second for a thief to steal your car with your child in it.”

When preparing for the holidays, it’s important to keep an extra eye on your children. Remember to:

- If possible, leave small children at home with a trusted babysitter when shopping.
- Teach your children to go to a clerk and ask for help if they are lost from you.
- Teach them to stay with you at all time when shopping.
- Tell them to avoid strangers and to inform you immediately if someone is bothering them or making them uncomfortable.
- Never let your kids make trips to the restroom without an adult.
- Children should never go to a car alone and should never be left in a car alone.
- It only takes a second for a thief to steal your car with your child in it.
- Teach children their name, address, and phone number to give to police or mall security.

Use These Driving Tips While Out and About

- Avoid driving alone or at night.
- Keep all car doors locked and windows closed while in or out of your car.
- Set your alarm or use an anti-theft device.
- If you must shop at night, park in a well-lighted area.
- Avoid parking next to vans, trucks with camper shells, or cars with tinted windows.
- Park as close as you can to your destination and take notice of where you parked.
- Never leave your car unoccupied with the motor running or with children inside.
- Do not leave packages or valuables on the seat of your car.
- If you must leave something in the car, lock it in the trunk or put it out of sight.
- Have your car key ready before going to your car.
- Keep a hold on your purse or bags. Do not put them down or on top of the car to open the door.
- When approaching and leaving your vehicle be aware of your surroundings.
- Do not approach your car alone if there are suspicious people in the area.
- If you are concerned, ask mall or store security for an escort before leaving your shopping location.
- Remember, in snowy or hazardous conditions to drive slowly and leave plenty of room to stop.
- Always try to drive with a full tank of gas and plenty of windshield wiper fluid.
- If you are stranded, wait in your locked car. Call for help on cell phone if available or wait until police arrive.



Keep Your Home Extra Secure During the Holidays

Take extra time to make sure your home is protected while you're out shopping, visiting and celebrating. Follow these suggestions:

- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave the house, even for a few minutes.
- When leaving home for an extended time, have a neighbor or family member watch your house and pick up your newspapers and mail.
- Ask or pay a trusted neighbor to shovel your snow if necessary.
- Indoor and outdoor lights should be on an automatic timer.
- Leave a radio or television on so the house looks and sounds occupied.
- Large displays of holiday gifts should not be visible through the windows and doors of your home.
- When setting up a Christmas tree or other holiday display, make sure doors and passageways are clear inside your home.
- Be sure your Christmas tree is mounted on a sturdy base so children, elderly persons or family pets cannot pull it over on themselves.
- If you use lights on your Christmas tree ensure the wiring is not damaged or frayed. Frayed or damaged wiring can cause a fire.
- Don't leave lights on overnight or when you are away from home.
- Use only fire resistant ornaments on a holiday tree.
- Place your Christmas tree in plenty of water or wet sand to keep it green.
- Continue to make sure the tree is properly watered and moist. A dry tree can be a serious fire hazard.
- Test your smoke detectors.
- After the holidays, mark new gifts with an identification number and record new serial numbers.
- Never place wrapping paper in your fireplace.
- Avoid leaving boxes from purchases visible out at the curb for trash pickup. It's a big clue to a thief on what new items you have inside.

Strangers at Your Door

- Be wary of strangers soliciting for charitable donations.
- They may try to take advantage of people's generosity during the holidays.
- Ask for identification, how donated funds are used, if contributions are tax deductible, etc. If you donate, get a receipt.
- If you aren't satisfied with the answers, don't give.
- Don't allow strangers in your home for any reason.
- Someone could be trying to use an excuse to get into your home and then steal your belongings.



“ . . . Make sure tree is properly watered and moist. A dry Christmas tree can be a serious fire hazard.

Taylor Police Department

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The Taylor Police Department officially started in 1949 with just two officers to serve the city's population at the time of 18,848 residents. During 1962, several more officers were added and a number of divisions and bureaus were created. In 1988 the current Police Station was built. Today, TPD has nearly 100 officers to serve 65,800 residents. Units the department has include Patrol Operations, K-9 Units, Investigations, Youth Services, Traffic, and Special Operations. Officers are also assigned to narcotics and County, State and Federal task forces.

The department's Mission, in part, is "dedicated to upholding a professional and ethical police standard while providing a safe and secure environment for all persons living in, working in or visiting the City of Taylor."

Be Responsible When Hosting Holiday Celebrations

There's a good reason why December is National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month. At least 50 percent of holiday traffic deaths are related to alcohol. Something to keep in mind if you're going to be hosting or attending a holiday party.

Planning a Safe Party:

Planning a family gathering or party at your house? If you're not careful, you could be potentially liable for guests that leave drunk. If your guests get into an accident because they had too much to drink at your party, the finger could be pointed at you. The best solution is to not serve alcohol and have a party filled with holiday foods, games and non-alcoholic drinks. But, if you still want to have alcoholic beverages, then we suggest the following tips:

- Ask friends to designate a driver before the party.
- Collect coats & keys as guests arrive.
- Encourage group activities that focus on fun—not alcohol.
- Make food and non-alcoholic drinks easily available.
- Provide plenty of food so the focus is not solely on alcohol.
- Discontinue serving any of your guests who appear to have had too much.
- Never serve alcohol to anyone under the age of 21.
- If someone has had too much to drink offer to have them spend the night or call a cab—don't let them drive home drunk.



Attending a Party

Have something to eat before drinking alcohol and eat high-protein foods that will stay in your stomach longer. Remember that only time will eliminate the alcohol from your body.

Know your safe limit—Never Drink & Drive!

- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration sites that if a 170-lb male had 5 drinks in a 2-hour period, he would be legally drunk with a .08 blood alcohol level, under Michigan law.
- A 135-lb female drinking 3 to 4 drinks in a 2-hour period would be legally drunk with a .08 blood alcohol level.
- Alcohol affects everyone differently. Know when you've had enough and don't drive.

Myths about Drinking and Driving:

- Coffee or a cold shower will sober you up—*False*.
- Drink beer and wine you will be fine—*False*.
- Roll down the windows and turn up the radio, you will be okay to drive home—*False*.
- By driving slow, you will avoid getting into an accident.—*False*.