

When you're out.



To turn your lights off, get an automatic timer. Get your mail and newspaper stopped and ask your neighbor to watch your house while you are gone.



Turn your lights on and maybe the tv or the radio station to make it look like someone is home. Be extra careful about locking doors and closing windows when you leave. It only takes a few minutes to protect your house. Don't leave gifts where they can be seen from the windows or through the doors.



Always be aware of what is going on around you. Lock your car, park in a well lit area, hide the shopping bags, and be sure to close your windows. Don't carry large amounts of cash and try to use a credit/debit card or check. Deter pickpockets by not over bearing yourself with packages. Carry your purse close to your body to avoid purse snatchers. If possible, put your wallet in a pocket inside your jacket. Teach your kids what to do if you get separated from them.



Criminals sometimes use the disguise of a courier during the holiday season to take advantage of other people's generosity, when no charity is involved. Always ask for ID and how the funds are going to be used. If you are not sure do not give. Only help organizations you are familiar with.



**Flathead County
Sheriff's Office**

CONTACT US

For more information on this and other department services, contact:

**Flathead County Sheriff's Office
Community Resource Unit
406.758.5602**

Or

Visit our website at www.flatheadcountysheriff.com

- Programs and Services
- Local crime mapping
- Crime prevention tips
- And more.....



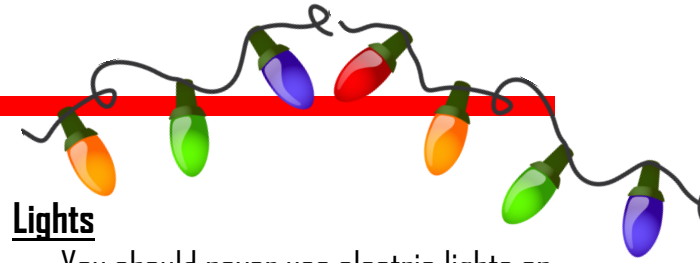
Safety Tips for a Safe Holiday



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Fire Safety for the Holidays



This holiday season, don't let the spirit of giving lull you into giving burglars, muggers, and pickpockets a better chance to do their dirty work. Crooks love the holidays as much as everyone else, but chiefly because it's an opportune time for crime. Homes jam packed with glittering gifts.

Stores, malls and downtown streets teeming with unsuspecting shoppers. People rushing around, stressed out and careless, looking for last-minute gifts, trying to get everything done. It's enough to make a crook giddy with holiday joy.

This brochure offers you some tips on how to celebrate this holiday season safely.

Trees

Look for the fire resistant label when purchasing artificial trees. When buying a live tree, check to see how fresh the tree because the fresher trees are less of a fire hazard. The needles should be hard to pull off the limbs, tree should be green, and the needles should be flexible and not break when bent with your fingers. The base of the tree should have resin on it making it sticky.

To keep the tree from dying and becoming a fire hazard it should be cut a few inches from the bottom so it can absorb water better. When putting up a tree in your house make sure to keep it away from fireplaces and anything else that can produce heat.



Lights

You should never use electric lights on metallic trees because they can become charged with electricity. When using outside lights check to see if they have been certified for outdoor use. When putting them up use string, hooks, or insulated staples to hold the lights in place. When using outside decorations make sure they are plugged into circuits with ground faults to prevent shorts.

Candles

While candles are burning never leave them unattended. Keep them away from anything that is flammable and out of the reach of children and pets. Cut the wick to about ¼ inch. Try to avoid candles that have combustible items in them. Make sure all the fire alarms in your house are fully functional.

Decorations

Never use lighted candles on a tree or near them. When small children are in the home, try not to use decorations that can break easily that they can inhale or swallow. Try not to use trimmings that look like candy to the kids. After the gifts are opened remove all the wrapping paper, bags, and ribbon away from the fireplace and/or away from kids because they could cause suffocation.

The holidays are a good time to update (or create) your home inventory. Take photos or make videos of items and list descriptions and serial numbers. If your home is burglarized, having a detailed inventory can help identify stolen items and make insurance claims easier to file. Make sure things like TVs, DVD players, stereo equipment, cameras, sports equipment, jewelry, silver, computers, home office equipment and power tools are on the list. Remember to check it twice!

