

Security experts offer tips on holiday safety

According to the National Retail Federation, consumers are expected to spend 3.9 percent more money on holiday shopping in 2013 than in 2012. Such consumer optimism may also mean that holiday shoppers are feeling the competitive spirit, battling busy stores and hunting down aggressive deals –and unintentionally putting their personal safety at risk, as a result.

“While big holiday shopping outings have become a tradition for many holiday shoppers, we encourage everyone to remain vigilantly aware of their surroundings,” said Tom Spethman, owner of Signal 88 Security of Lincoln.

Whether you’re hitting the stores on Black Friday or anytime between now and Christmas, Signal 88 Security offers the following holiday shopping advice to consumers.

Before the Holidays

- Practice patience: Often, long lines can lead to short tempers. When stores’ doors open, proceed with caution, and avoid running or pushing. Same goes for standing in long checkout lines; expect to encounter potentially frustrating delays if out on one of the major shopping days.
- Stand guard: Inside a store, never leave a purse, wallet or shopping cart unattended. Also, be mindful of security threats in parking lots. Always keep vehicles locked and purchases out of sight. Enlist the assistance of store security if feeling uncomfortable walking to the car at night.

After the Holidays

- Keep records: Record serial numbers for expensive items, especially electronics. If a person’s home were to be burglarized, good records of these items could help law enforcement recover them. And, to further prevent post-holiday home invasions, don’t leave boxes for trash pick-up that showcase any new, big ticket items received over the holidays.
- Return respectfully: What can be even more frustrating than the long lines and shopping delays before the holidays are the long lines and shopping delays after the big day. A person may also be less inclined to pay attention to their surroundings, with the pressure of the holidays. However, remaining aware of the people and events around at all times is key to personal security.

“If you see something or someone suspicious, be sure to let law enforcement or store security know,” said Spethman. “You can do yourself and fellow shoppers a favor by looking out for one another this holiday season.”