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# MIDDLETON POLICE DEPARTMENT

7341 Donna Drive Middleton, WI 53562

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*Brad Keil - Chief of Police*

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

11/28/2012

### **Middleton Police Offer Tips for a Safe, Happy Holiday Season**

#### **At Home**

If using an artificial tree, be sure its label reads "Fire Resistant." While this doesn't mean it can't catch fire, it does mean it should resist burning and should extinguish quickly.

If using a live tree, be sure it is fresh (it isn't already losing needles) and has a new, clean cut on the bottom of the trunk before putting up.

Turn off lights when you go to bed or aren't home.

#### **While shopping**

The threat of physical assault does not necessarily increase along with the crowds that herald the holiday season. It's when you're far from the crowd, in distant reaches of parking lots or other isolated areas of the mall that you are most vulnerable. To protect yourself:

- Always try to walk to and from your vehicle with another person. If you are shopping alone, consider walking near other shoppers in the parking lot.
- If shopping alone and leaving at night -- particularly if you're carrying several bundles -- ask a security officer to accompany you to your car. Most malls will provide that service.
- Inside a mall, avoid darkened hallways and other backroom areas, especially near closing time.

#### **Pickpockets and Purse Theft Preventions**

Jostling through crowded malls while carrying your jacket, juggling countless bags and keeping your child from breaking anything you can't afford to buy makes you an attractive target to criminals looking to grab wallets, purses and your purchases. To standoff would-be thieves:

- A man should carry his wallet in the front pocket of his pants, rather than in a back pocket or in his jacket. A woman should hold her purse close to her body, with the opening facing toward her; when walking with another person, the purse should be held between the two.
- Consolidate purchases into one or two large shopping bags so you can keep track of everything. Never leave your purchases unattended, even for a few minutes.

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Phone: (608) 824-7300

[www.middletonpd.com](http://www.middletonpd.com)



Fax: (608) 833-9990

[police@ci.middleton.wi.us](mailto:police@ci.middleton.wi.us)

### **Parking Lot/Car Safety**

As parking areas fill during the holiday season, shoppers are often forced to park far from mall exits, sometimes in poorly lighted areas. Now that there is less daylight, you're likely to find yourself entering the mall while the sun is up and leaving after dark, so make sure there are lights nearby before parking. Other parking tips:

- Park as close to entrances and exits as you can. No one wants to circle the lot for an hour waiting for a good spot to open up, but give it a shot, at least for a few minutes.
- If your purchases are in plain view, you may return to find your car windows smashed and your presents stolen. Save your most expensive purchases for last, so you can head straight home.
- Have your keys ready when you approach your vehicle. Before entering, check that no one is hiding in the back seat.

Officer Jill Tutaj  
Community Awareness Officer  
(608)824-7323  
[jtutaj@ci.middleton.wi.us](mailto:jtutaj@ci.middleton.wi.us)

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