



NEWS RELEASE

COLTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

With the holidays upon us shopping presents a unique danger. Taking a few prevention measures can help keep your holiday season joyous. During this time of the year, busy shoppers become vulnerable to criminal activity. Law enforcement agencies throughout the nation provide essentially the same safety tips:

- Shop during the daylight hours whenever possible. If you must shop at night, go with a friend or family member.
- If you have to wait for a ride, wait in a busy well lit place.
- Dress casually and comfortably.
- Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- Do not carry a purse or wallet, if possible.
- Always carry your California driver license or identification card along with necessary cash, checks and/or a credit card you expect to use.
- Even though you are rushed and thinking about several things, stay alert to your surroundings.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.
- Pay for purchases with a check or credit card when possible. Keep in mind that debit cards may not carry the same protections as regular credit cards.
- Keep cash in your front pocket.
- Notify the credit card issuer immediately if your card is lost, stolen, or misused.
- Keep a record of all your credit card numbers in a safe place at home.
- Be extra careful if you do carry a wallet or purse. They are the prime targets of criminals in crowded shopping areas, transportation terminals, bus stops, on buses and other rapid transit.
- Avoid overloading yourself with packages. It is important to have clear visibility and freedom of motion to avoid mishaps.
- Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason. At this time of year, "con-artists" may try various methods of distracting you with the intention of taking your money or belongings.
- If you find it necessary to store your purchases in your car, make sure that they are not visible from the outside. Lock your car and make sure the windows are closed.
- If you are the victim of a crime, report it to police immediately.

Many find it safer to shop from the comfort of their own home by doing their shopping on the Internet. Although the Internet has made it easier to accomplish many things, it also makes it easier for

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scammers, con-artists, and other miscreants to carry out their virtual crimes. If you find it necessary to use a credit card online, refrain from using debit cards that may not offer the same protections.

- Phishing scams trick the intended victim into visiting a fraudulent website disguised to look like a valid eCommerce or banking site. The victim believes they are logging into their real account, but in actuality the information they enter into the fake site is being sent to the scammers.
- Greeting card scams occur when an email pretending to be from a friend or family member is received. Once opened the recipient is lead to a booby trapped web page that downloads Trojans and other malicious software onto the unsuspecting victims' computer.
- The shopper-needed scam sends the "new hire" a check for a few hundred dollars, instructing them to cash the check and take their portion, then forward on the remaining funds to the new "employer." The check is bogus and will bounce. The victim will be liable for the funds spent and forwarded from the check, plus any service fees that result.
- The reshipping and payment processing fraud places the unsuspecting victim in the middle of illegal activity and leaves them on the hook for any amount transferred and fees that result. The sender will usually offer to send a large amount of money or a valuable item that the receiver gets to keep a portion of. The victim will be asked to provide some money up front and be allowed to keep the remainder, which never comes or is in the form of a fraudulent check. In some cases the sender will just ask for personal information that will result in identity theft.
- Be wary of fake charities, Spam solicitations, free giveaways, and high pressure sales.

Remember, the goal of these types of scams is to get your personal information. If it sounds too good to be true, it's probably a scam.

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