

NOVEMBER 2020



## Raleigh Police Department Community Newsletter

This newsletter is produced by the Public Affairs Unit of the Raleigh Police Department. It provides Raleigh residents with crime prevention tips, seasonal information, and upcoming RPD community activities.

November is the start of one of the busiest shopping stretches of the holiday season. Whether you plan on shopping the online sales, Black Friday, Small Business Saturday or Cyber Monday, theft is most likely not on your shopping list.

This RPD Community Newsletter features tips to keep you safe while shopping during this busy holiday season. Please share this information with family, friends, and neighbors.

### HOW TO KEEP YOURSELF SAFE WHILE SHOPPING ON THE INTERNET

Don't let fake companies and identity thieves dampen your holiday spirit. Before you click the 'Buy' button this holiday season, check out these tips to help you enjoy safer online shopping.



**Shop at websites you trust**-On the web, some businesses are fabricated by people who just want your credit card information and other personal details. To play it safe, consider doing online business only with retailers you trust and have shopped with before.

**Check out the business**-If there's no email address, phone number or address for a brick-and-mortar location, that could be a signal that it's a fake company.

**Beware rock-bottom prices**-Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and other big sales along the way have become a tradition of holiday shopping. But if a website offers something that

looks too good to be true, then it probably is. The website may exist only to get your personal information.

**Avoid public Wi-Fi**-With a little tech know-how and the freely available Wi-Fi password at your favorite cafe, someone can intercept what you're looking at on the web.

**Create strong passwords**-If someone has the password to your account, they can log in, change the shipping address, and order things while you get stuck with the bill. Help keep your account safe by locking it with a strong password.

**Watch out for email scams**-Clicking on emails from unknown senders and unrecognizable sellers could infect your computer with viruses and malware. It's better to play it safe. Delete them, don't click on any links, and don't open any attachments from individuals or businesses you are unfamiliar with.

**Pay with a credit card**-If someone racks up unauthorized charges on your credit card, federal regulations say you won't have to pay while the card company investigates. Most major credit cards offer \$0 liability for fraudulent purchases.

Please call 911 if you have experienced a crime or if you want to report any suspicious activity.

## SHOPPING SAFETY TIPS

Crime increases each year during the holiday shopping season. Shoppers may be so busy that they fail to be aware of their surroundings that they become easy targets for criminals. Don't allow yourself to become a victim!

### ***Before Leaving Home***

- Plan your shopping trip carefully. Know where you are going and what routes you will take to get there.
- If possible, arrange for a friend to go shopping with you. There is safety in numbers.
- Let someone know where you are going and what route you will be taking. Additionally, let them know when you expect to return.
- Leave your home secure, engage alarms, and give the appearance that your home is occupied by leaving the lights on in the most frequently used rooms.
- Don't leave valuable items out in the open. Secure them in closets, safes, etc.

### ***When Parking***

- Always park in well-lit areas. Note the location of your vehicle in the parking lot to conveniently return after shopping.
- Always lock all your doors.
- Remove all items, such as laptops, or packages and hide them in the trunk, glove compartment, out of sight.
- Avoid parking near vans or other vehicles with covered cargo areas.
- Avoid carrying large handbags. Carry only what is necessary.
- Look around the parking lot for suspicious persons before you exit your vehicle.
- Don't get out of your vehicle until you are ready. If you don't feel safe, stay in the car or drive away.

### ***While Shopping***

- Keep your money and credit cards in your front pocket and try to limit the number of credit cards and cash you're carrying while shopping.
- To avoid being a victim of "Identity Theft", be aware of exposing credit cards, debit cards, and other identification at the cash register and ATM's. Thieves will utilize cell phones to capture card information without your knowledge.
- Be cognizant of any other type of "Distraction" type of



crimes that typically occur during this time of the year.

- Pay for purchases with a check or credit card when possible.
- Notify the credit card issuer immediately if your credit card is lost, stolen or misused.
- Keep a record of all of your credit card numbers in a safe place at home.

### ***When Returning to Your Car***

- Never leave the store with your arms full of packages. Use a courtesy cart.
- Have your car key in hand, ready to unlock your door.
- Check the parking lot for suspicious people and look around before you exit the store.
- Do not return to your vehicle if you see people loitering nearby.
- Carry a whistle or other audible device. If you feel threatened, use it. If you're inside your vehicle, lock your doors and honk your horn to attract attention.
- Check underneath, in front and in back of your car as you approach it.
- Check the front and rear passenger seats inside your car before you enter it.
- If you are planning on returning to the store, never leave your packages in plain view inside your vehicle. Lock them in the trunk or place them on the floor and cover them with a blanket or jacket.
- ALWAYS BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS.