

# MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
MS AGRICULTURAL AND  
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

*Holiday Safety*

Christmas Holidays are a special time of the year. People are hustling around and if we aren't careful safety and security might get a little slack. Following are some tips that will make this Christmas season safer and more enjoyable:

## Christmas Lights & Extension Cords-

- Use only UL or FM approved extension cords (temporary use only).
- Make sure that the cord is heavy enough to carry the load. The thicker the cord the heavier load it will accommodate without heating up.
- Do not overload the outlets. Use surge protectors where multiple outlets are needed.
- Replace broken bulbs immediately that have exposed filaments.
- Refrain from running cords under doors or hallways with doors that could ultimately cause the cords to fray.

## Toys & Ornaments-

- Purchase the toys for the appropriate age of the child. Refrain from buying older age toys for younger kids as they could get hurt.
- Toys with sharp points, edges, strings, cords or parts small enough to be swallowed should not be given to small children.
- Place older ornaments and decorations with lead paint out of the reach of small children and pets.

## Holiday Parties-

- Do not ever drink and drive!
- Provide non-alcoholic drinks for designated drivers and those who abstain from adult beverages.
- Avoid live candles at parties, and if smoking is allowed-provide plenty of ash trays placed around the home in strategic areas.

## Interesting facts from the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)-

- Every year hospital emergency rooms treat about 12,500 people with injuries from falls, cuts, and shocks from holiday lights, decorations, and Christmas trees.
- Candles start about 11,600 fires, resulting in 150 deaths, 1,200 injuries, and \$173 million in property losses.

## Holiday Shopping Tips-

- Shop during the daylight hours. However, if you have to shop at night-do it with a friend or "buddy." Park in well-lit areas.
- Dress casual and comfortable. Avoid wearing expensive jewelry and avoid carrying a purse or wallet.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. Carry your license, cards and cash in your front pocket.
- Place your purchases in your trunk or back of your SUV where they aren't so conspicuous.
- Avoid overloading yourself with packages that might deter your visibility when you're returning to your vehicle.
- If you are approached by a "suspect thief" and he wants your purse. Throw it in the in the opposite direction from where you are standing and run like the devil in the other direction. Chances are that he wants your money, not you. When you are safe, alert the police or security.
- Be observant of your surroundings in the parking lot. Watch for strangers or vans/SUVs parked close to your vehicle. Thieves like to park close to their prey. When leaving a shopping area for your vehicle, if a stranger is lurking around it, return to the shopping area and seek out the aid of a security officer or police officer to assist you back to your vehicle. Or wait until the stranger leaves your area.
- Have your keys handy when you approach your vehicle. Once inside lock the doors and leave the area immediately.

## Shopping with Children-

- If at all possible, leave small children with relatives or a friend.
- Teach your children to go to a store clerk if they get separated from you. Also teach them to stay as close to you at all times when shopping.
- Don't allow them to go to the restroom without you or other adult supervision.
- Teach your kids your home address and phone numbers so that they will be able to give it to the police or security officers at the mall.

*For more info contact – Leslie Woolington*

**MAFES /MSU-EXTENSION**

**Risk Mgmt. / Loss Control**

**(662) 325-3204**