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A public information organization of insurance companies

# **\*\*NEWS RELEASE\*\***

**FOR RELEASE: AT WILL**

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## **SAFETY TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON**

The Missouri Insurance Information Service cautions that crowded shopping malls, streets and parking lots can provide ample opportunity for theft during the holiday season.

In order to help Missourians enjoy a safer holiday season, the insurance industry offers the following advice:

- Park your car in a brightly lit, well-traveled area. Be sure to lock your car and take the keys with you.
- Place your purchases in the trunk or at least out of sight.
- Avoid shopping alone. People in pairs or groups are less likely to be attacked than individuals traveling alone.
- Take only the money you'll need if you're paying for purchases with cash.
- If you're paying with a charge card, make sure it is returned to you by the clerk.
- Get your car keys ready before you walk to the parking area. Juggling packages while you look for your keys may make you a target for a thief.

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Keep in mind that Christmas trees and decorations require special care in order to avoid a fire loss. Here are some holiday home safety tips:

- Make sure a live Christmas tree is fresh before you buy it. If the needles fall off when you shake it, you should probably look for another tree.
- Put your live tree in a sturdy stand and water it daily.
- Keep the tree away from candles, fireplaces, space heaters, electrical appliances and other heat sources that can ignite the tree or dry it out. Never use lighted candles as Christmas tree decorations.
- Keep holiday candles away from open windows, drapes and flammable materials.
- Be sure the decorations you put on the tree are not flammable and that all tree lights have been approved by a recognized testing laboratory.
- Unplug all tree lights while you're away from home or sleeping.
- Check all sockets, wiring and bulbs before using them. Replace them if they are worn or rusted.
- Have a safe and happy holiday season!

Missouri Insurance Information Service is a public information organization representing insurance companies in Missouri.

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