Lincoln County
Sheriff's Office
Sheriff Adam D. Shanks

225 W. Olive Street
Newport, Oregon 97365
(541) 265-4277

TIP OF THE WEEK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Sheriff Adam Shanks
541-265-0652
lcsheriff@co.lincoln.or.us

HOLIDAY SHOPPING SAFETY

With the holiday season beginning there are many things to keep in mind, including travel safety, winter weather preparation, and shopping security. Below are some tips to keep in mind as you shop this holiday season.

Shopping In-Stores:

- Be alert and aware. Be attentive to your surroundings.
- Don't carry more cash or valuables than necessary.
- Take extra precautions with your wallet or purse. Carry your purse with the opening flap next to your body and the strap hung over your shoulder.
- Review shopping safety with children and always know where they are. Before going shopping, decide where to meet if you become separated.
- Always lock your car doors and remember where you park.
- Be sure to place valuables out of sight. Place them in the trunk or take them with you.
- Never hide spare keys in or on your car. If you need spare keys, keep them in your wallet or purse.
- Be alert to suspicious persons or circumstances. Avoid parking where you see someone sitting in their vehicle for no apparent reason.
- Trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable or unsafe in a situation, report it to security immediately.
- When walking in any parking lot, store, airport, shopping center, etc., walk confidently with your head up, make eye contact, and have your keys or phone ready.
- Use appropriate marked driving lanes and obey all traffic signs.
- Drive defensively and courteously.

- Remember, parking lots will be more crowded and checkout lanes will be busier, please be patient and plan to spend more time commuting and shopping.

Shopping Online:

- Use trusted and reputable websites with secure payment systems and be cautious with personal information.
- Before entering any sensitive information, make sure the website has a secure connection. Look for a padlock symbol and "https://" in the website URL.
- Use strong and unique passwords for your online accounts.
- Keep your devices, operating systems, and security software up to date to protect your device and information.
- Be aware of deals that seem too good to be true. Scammers use enticing offers to trick shoppers.
- Trust your instincts. If something feels off about a website or a product, trust your gut and consider shopping elsewhere.
- Help prevent packages from being stolen:
    - Schedule deliveries to arrive when you will be home or have them delivered to your office.
    - Have a trusted neighbor or friend pick up your packages if you won't be home.
    - Install a security camera on your property.
    - Have packages delivered to a shipping store. If you hold a post office box, use USPS for shipping and take advantage of their package lockers to receive your items. Some post offices allow boxholders to use it's street address, with the customer's box number as the "unit" number for deliveries from other carriers.

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