

Holiday Safety Tips



ROBERT M. MORGENTHAU
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Holiday Shopping (continued)

Robberies

- When returning home, be sure to have your keys in hand and look around for strangers before entering. If you have a car, do the same before getting into the car.
- Do not let strangers into your apartment building, even if it may seem rude. If a stranger wants to get into your building, tell him or her to use the intercom.
- Do not get into an elevator with anyone who makes you feel uncomfortable. Wait for the next elevator, or wait for one of your neighbors.
- Do not open the door unless you are sure of who is at the door. Ask to see identification if someone you don't know claims to be there for a legitimate purpose, such as a home repair.

Holiday Parties

We all enjoy holiday parties where we can celebrate with our friends, colleagues, and family. However, holiday parties also carry special risks. Here are some important tips for how to have a good time and remain safe:

Drinking and Driving

More so during the holiday season than at any other time of the year, people are attending parties at which alcohol is served.

- DO NOT drink and drive!
- If you do drink, make sure you can find a ride home with someone who has not been drinking.
- Do not let someone who has been drinking drive you home.
- Whether you are a driver or a pedestrian, be wary at all times of potential drunk drivers. Drunk drivers are often recognizable by their tendency to weave in and out of driving lanes, and to disobey traffic rules and regulations.

Protecting Property

If you go to a party, make sure to secure your personal property when you first arrive. It can be easy to lose track of your belongings while enjoying the event. Unattended property is an easy target for criminals.

Coming Home from a Party

If you have been drinking at a party, bar or restaurant, you will be less alert and more vulnerable to criminals on your way home, especially if it is late at night. Be aware of these risks and be especially careful when coming home. (See the tips about robberies, listed above.)

Whom to Call

- **In an Emergency:** CALL 911!
- **Manhattan District Attorney's Office:** If at any point during the holiday season you would like safety advice, please call the Community Affairs Unit of the Manhattan District Attorney's Office at 212.335.9082.
- **New York City Information and Services:** If you need services or information from the city, call 311.
- **Local Precinct:** Call your local precinct regarding concerns within your precinct.





ROBERT M. MORGENTHAU
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Dear Friends,

Shopping, decorating, parties, religious events, and family gatherings typically make the holiday season one of the most exciting times of the year. But it can be quickly spoiled by criminals who take advantage of this hectic time. The New York County District Attorney's Office would like to remind you of a few important safety tips and wish you a happy and safe holiday season.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Morgenthau

Holiday Shopping

Whether shopping makes you jump for joy or cringe, chances are that you will have to do at least some of it during the holiday season. Large crowds and the urgency of getting the right gifts in time for the holidays make shoppers particularly vulnerable during this season. Here are some suggestions for how to prevent many common, holiday-related crimes:

Pickpockets

- Try to carry as little cash with you as possible, since stolen cash cannot be replaced. If you need to carry a large amount of cash, keep some of the cash in your wallet or purse and some in your pockets.
- Carry your purse under your arm or keep your wallet in a front (preferably zippered) pocket. In holiday shopping mall crowds, shoppers can be easy targets for pickpockets.
- Pickpockets often work in teams, with one person creating a distraction while another takes your property. If someone is distracting you or demanding your attention, make sure your property is secure.
- Don't take out a wad of money when you pay. This will only advertise to pickpockets how much money you have and where you put the money after paying.
- Write down the numbers for the cards you keep in your wallet or purse, and keep the list of numbers in a safe place at home. If your wallet or purse is stolen, having these numbers will make it easier to report the theft and cancel any cards or accounts.

Bag Snatchers and Con Artists

- Do not carry an excessive number of shopping bags or packages at once. They make it difficult for you to react to your surroundings and to guard against potential bag snatchers.
- Be wary of a person offering to help you with your packages. That person may want to take your packages or distract you in order to steal other items of yours.
- Never leave your purse, handbag, or any shopping bags unattended. When in a restaurant, do not assume that bags left on the back of your chair or on the floor are safe. Whenever possible, keep bags on your lap.
- Be especially careful with shopping bags from luxury stores – Tiffany's, Gucci, etc. If possible, put your expensive purchases in bags that are less likely to draw thieves' attention. If you must carry shopping bags from luxury stores, keep them close to your body to make them more difficult for thieves to steal.
- There is safety in numbers. Shopping with friends or relatives reduces your risk of being a victim of theft.
- Do not leave packages in your car longer than is absolutely necessary. Any packages you do put in your car should be locked in the trunk and out of plain sight.

ATM Crime

- Especially at night, use ATMs that are indoors and that require you to swipe your card to enter.
- Shield others' view of the keypad as you type in your PIN number.
- Put away your card, money, and receipt as soon as you finish your transaction.
- Do not spend time at the ATM counting your money.