



Short Safety Subject

Short Safety Subjects are provided by the Public Safety Business Center, Fort Bragg, NC. Our intent is to provide safety topics for the purpose of increasing safety awareness and improving safety performance. Additional Short Safety Subjects are available on the PSBC Business Management Web Site at:

www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm

Christmas Holiday Safety Tips

Shopping tips:

Holiday times bring more people to the stores and with them come opportunities for the criminal eliminate to strike. You must always be conscious of this and act accordingly. Keep your pocketbook or wallet secure, and watch out for pickpockets and purse snatchers. A standard approach is for one person to "bump" into you and while you are distracted, another lifts your wallet. Be leery of anyone who distracts your attention, it may be the prelude to a robbery. Never leave any packages in your car. If you must store your purchases, place them in the trunk where they will not be visible to anyone. Be aware of anyone acting suspiciously in the parking lots, if you think someone is up to no good contact store security. When in the store do not leave your purchases unattended, it is very easy for someone to pick them up, while you are shopping and then blend into the crowd. If you bring children with you make sure that they stay close by. You should establish a place to meet, in the event you become separated, since it is very easy for a child to become overwhelmed by the displays and crowds. Pay careful attention to the suggested ages listed on games and toys. Small children have been known to place objects in their mouths and swallow them. Checks to make sure that any gifts, for small children, do not have small loose parts and that buttons or other parts of toys are securely affixed. Save all receipts. They may be important in the event you have to return an item later on, you should also check the return policy for the stores.



Outdoor lighting:

I am always amazed at how beautiful some people decorate the outside of their homes. The lights and figures help the holiday spirit grow, but you must take care when decorating your home. Only use lights and decorations that are designed for outdoor use. Carefully check all electrical plugs, wire, bulbs, and sockets BEFORE use. If you find any damaged do not use them. Make sure that the power source is protected by a ground fault interrupter and all connections are made in such a manner that rain or snow will not affect them. Exercise extreme care when using ladders, following the manufacturers guidelines at all times. Remember that roofs and walks can become slippery with ice, so take precautions.

Indoor decorations:

As with outdoor lights, carefully check all electrical plugs, wire, bulbs, and sockets BEFORE use. If you find any damaged do not use them. Although not as important as with outdoor lights, I recommend that you use a ground fault protected circuit for indoor lights, especially if the tree has metal parts. Do not use lighted candles as decorations, they may look nice but they are very dangerous. If you purchase a real tree make sure you keep it watered and away from all sources of heat. Check the water level every day and also check to make sure that they are not drying out. Once a tree becomes dry, it is a danger to everyone! If possible, locate your tree near a smoke detector. It will alert you sooner in the event of a fire. Keep all decorations away from heat sources, such as fireplaces and heaters. Hanging the stockings by the chimney, with care, is fine, as long as you do hang them with care. Be very careful when unwrapping gifts, make sure that the wrapping paper does not get too close to the fireplace, or space heaters. Pay particular attention to children, who in the excitement may not be as careful. Place all wrapping materials in a bag, but do not throw out until you are sure that no pieces of gifts are missing. Nothing is worse than throwing out the wrapping paper and then discovering that you also threw out some parts for one of the gifts. Make sure that your decorations do not interfere with your alarm system. Do not block motion detectors or place decorations in a location that may cause false alarms. Flashing lights close to an infrared detector or moving signs/balloons can cause the detector to falsely activate. If you have not tested, cleaned, and replaced the batteries in your smoke detectors, now is a good time to do it.