



Cybercriminals, thieves and road hazards can become real-life Scrooges this time of the year. Take some time to review safety tips that can help keep the season festive.

## ONLINE SHOPPING

Shopping online can be a great tool in finding the perfect holiday gifts. For the 2019 holiday season, 73 percent of consumers plan to use smartphones or tablets to research and make shopping purchases, according to a [National Retail Federation survey](#). Review the following tips about staying safe online before clicking on the checkout button.

- Email advertising and spam traffic may increase during the holiday season. If the subject of an email from a known or unknown sender seems suspicious, delete the email without opening it.
- If an advertisement or other offer sounds too good to be true, it may be. Check it out through a reliable source.
- Keep security software updated on every electronic device.
- Avoid shopping on public Wi-Fi connections or public computers. It's hard to ensure they are secure.
- Use complex passwords to safeguard personal information. A combination of upper- and lower-case letters, numbers and special characters offers the most protection.
- Avoid visiting unknown webpages because malicious software could be downloaded.
- When making online purchases with a credit or debit card, use a secure online escrow broker to provide payment.
- If available, consider using a virtual credit card service. The terms of use vary based on the service provider.
- Make sure to print or save a hard copy of every transaction receipt in the event there is confusion about payment.

## HOME SAFETY

Jack Frost isn't the only one tapping on the window. A 2019 [C+R Research report](#) found that 36 percent of Americans have had a package stolen at least once, and about half of those surveyed said they are worried about a package being stolen this holiday season. Safeguard against possible thefts by following these tips.

- Try not to leave multiple or large packages outside for long time periods. Stay home when a delivery is expected, or have a package delivered to a friend or family member who can receive it immediately.
- Consider installing a doorbell camera.

- Ask the delivery service to try to hide the package or hold it for pickup later.
- Do not leave presents near windows or doors where thieves can see them.
- When leaving the home, lock every door and window to make it more difficult for thieves to break in and commit a burglary.
- When away from home for an extended period, ask a trusted friend or neighbor to visit the house for some time every day. Also check with the local police department to see if officers can keep an eye on the house.
- Remember to ask for daily newspaper and mail delivery to be stopped if traveling for a long period of time.

## TRAVELING

Before going over the river and through the woods this holiday season, review some traveling safety tips.

- Keep track of weather and road conditions through local radio, news channels or social media postings. Other resources include the [Indiana Travel Advisory Map](#) and the Indiana Department of Transportation's [travel information page](#). The advisory map and an [INDOT Mobile app](#) are also available on Android and Apple devices.
- If traveling by vehicle, have a mechanic complete a vehicle inspection before the planned departure.
- If traveling with children, remind them not to speak to strangers and to keep a responsible adult with them at all times.
- Pets should always be kept in their carriers or secured on a leash to prevent escape.
- Have a fully-stocked emergency vehicle kit.
- If something appears suspicious immediately, report it to law enforcement.
- Never drive after consuming any alcohol. Call a taxi, designate a sober driver or stay the night to prevent accidents.