

# Holiday Safety Reminders

Dear Resident:

With the holiday season upon us, we should all take a minute to think about safety. We would like to remind you to be especially conscientious about your surroundings, not only within the apartment community, but also when visiting shopping malls, friends and family.

## Personal Safety

Unfortunately, criminal activity, including assault, robbery and burglary, increases during this time of year. So here are a few simple tips to help protect yourself and your loved ones.

**Stop, Look, Listen!:** That is one of the biggest mistakes we all make everyday! Be aware of your surroundings.

**Park in a Well-Lit Area:** Always park where there is plenty of light, not only around your vehicle, but also from your car to the mall entrance. And always try to park as close to the entrance as possible. Remember to lock your car, close the windows and hide shopping bags and gifts in the trunk so they are not visible.

**Have Your Keys Ready:** When leaving a store always make sure you know where you had parked your vehicle and have those keys in your hand.

**Don't Go Alone:** When you intend on shopping at night be sure you have a friend or relative come along. If you find yourself alone when leaving a store, ask the security guard to walk you to your car. Most malls and shopping centers have increased the number of security personnel to accommodate shoppers in this manner. Don't hesitate to ask for an escort if you feel unsafe.

**Hold on to Your Money:** Wear a fanny pack instead of carrying a purse. Besides allowing your hands to be free to hold onto or carry your child or packages, you'll eliminate the possibility of leaving your purse behind or having it stolen. Only bring one or two credit cards and a limited amount of cash with you, in the case that it should get lost or stolen. And for you men out there ... it can happen to you too! Put your money and only necessary credit cards in your front trouser pocket, it's too hard for a criminal to get at it.

**Shopping With Children?:** It's okay to let children look around and have fun while they shop, but they also need to understand that it's important to stay near their parents. However, in the event you are separated, teach your child to look for a security guard or police officer, or go to the customer service desk where people are trained to help.

**If You Are Out for the Evening:** Turn on the lights and a radio or TV so it looks like someone is home. Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave, even if it's just for a few minutes. And don't display gifts where they can be seen from outside.

**If You Are Traveling:** Get an automatic timer for your lights and/or ask a friend or neighbor to watch your home. Don't forget to make arrangements to have your mail and newspaper picked up. If it piles up, it's a sure sign you're gone!

**If a Stranger Comes to the Door, Beware:** Criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts. And it is not uncommon for people to try to take advantage of others' generosity during the holidays for going door to door for charitable donations when there's no charity involved. Ask for identification and find out how funds will be used. If you are not satisfied, don't give.

As you can appreciate, no one can ensure your personal safety. Please remember that your well-being is your responsibility and that of the local law enforcement agencies.

### Decorating Safety

Every year thousands of people are injured or killed due to faulty holiday decorations. Residential fires during the holiday season are especially tragic. Celebration and joy can quickly turn to sorrow and anguish because basic fire safety guidelines were neglected. "It can happen to you," so be careful and have a safe and carefree holiday season. Some safety tips to consider:

**Fireplaces:** Fireplaces are very popular during the holidays. Before starting a fire, make sure you remove all decorations from the area and be sure that the flu is open. Do not burn wrappings or evergreen boughs. These can burn extremely fast, throwing off sparks and burning debris. Safely dispose of wrapping paper with your normal trash collection. Also, remember to maintain a source of fresh air to avoid possible build-up of carbon monoxide gas. NEVER LEAVE A FIRE BURNING UNATTENDED.

**Candles:** Never leave a candle burning unattended. Place candles in a sturdy container to avoid falling over. Remember to extinguish candles before going to bed.

**Christmas Trees:** When buying a natural tree, the most important precaution is freshness. The higher the moisture content the less likely it is to dry out and become a fire hazard. Artificial trees should bear the UL label and should be made of fire resistant material. This does not mean that the tree will not burn, but only that it will not catch fire easily. Never use electric lights on metallic trees. Place trees away from fireplaces, kerosene heaters and other heat sources and remember to turn off your tree lights whenever you leave your home or go to bed.

**Holiday Lights:** Use only UL approved lighting. Inspect electric lights for broken or cracked sockets and frayed wires, replace if necessary. Do not use indoor lights outdoors or visa-versa. Do not overload extension cords and do not connect more than three (3) sets of lights to one cord. Never use lighted candles on or near a tree. Outdoor lights should be weatherproof and clearly identified as designed for outdoor use. Turn off all holiday lights when you leave your home or go to bed. Remove outdoor lighting as soon as the season is over.

**Tree Ornaments and Trimmings:** Avoid placing small or breakable ornaments on lower branches where children or pets can reach them and knock them off. Every year children are treated for cuts from broken ornaments or from swallowing broken pieces and small parts.

Careful planning can ensure a safe and enjoyable Holiday season for everyone.

On behalf of the management and staff of The Forum at Denton Station we would like to take this opportunity to wish you a very happy holiday and a wonderful New Year.