

Watchwords By Officer Tom Hanshaw
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“Tis the Holiday Season” so it’s time for a few holiday and seasonal safety tips! After all, no one wants the Grinch to steal their Christmas or have a year without a Santa Claus. The month of December can be hectic, with shopping trips, family obligations, parties and maybe even a vacation. No matter what is on your “to-do” list; it’s a good idea to set a pace. Rushing about can lead to a car crash, frayed nerves and sometimes even the flu. Surprisingly, the holidays will come and go, regardless of stressed you let them be.

Shopping for the holidays can be stressful to say the least with crowds, sales, limited selections and the quest for the perfect gift. Do as much shopping as possible early in the season to reduce some of the hassle. Keep track of your purchases and avoid carrying more than you can handle. Never leave gifts in your car where they can be examined by outsiders. Store purchases in the trunk whenever possible. Avoid carrying large amounts of cash and never display what you have in crowds. Use credit cards wisely and carefully to reduce the odds of fraudulent use. Identity theft continues to be a rapidly growing problem, keep track of your personal information and report a lost or stolen card as soon as possible.

Native New Englanders are likely too familiar with the effect our weather can have on scheduled events. A snowstorm can alter plans, regardless of the preparations you’ve made. At this time of year, I cannot stress enough the importance of monitoring the forecast. Sure, we joke about the accuracy of weathermen and women sometimes but it’s better to be prepared than sorry. I chuckle each time someone tells me the line, “I didn’t know it was going to snow today.” It’s usually after they have exchanged papers at a crash or have been towed out of a ditch. If a storm is forecast, make every effort to stay off the road. It’s much easier to wait until after the roads have been cleared than to risk a detour.

Finally, it’s definitely a time to give thanks and to celebrate. Celebrating should be done responsibly because no family deserves to suffer through a tragedy at this time of year. Drinking and driving do not mix; if you even think you may be impaired don’t take the risk by getting behind the wheel. Designate a driver, use public transportation or call a taxi. Consider staying overnight or even walking to your destination. Remember to wear your safety belt on every trip, no matter how short the commute. State and local police officers will be enforcing traffic laws to help keep our highways and streets safer for everyone, so slow down and avoid any aggressive driving.