

# Security Spotlight

An Informational Guide for Securitas USA Clients and Employees



December 2015

Number 141

## Give the Gifts of Tolerance and Safety



**As the holiday season and New Year approach we will witness the annual hustle and bustle of the shopping season. At times, the overcrowded malls and stores can elicit the less desirable traits in all of us. So, as we go out shopping this season, we need to show people that we are making a concerted effort in helping others, thus reinforcing everyone's faith in humanity. It is with this spirit, that Securitas would like to focus on our last Spotlight of 2015.**

### **GIFT OF TOLERANCE**

So what does giving a gift of tolerance actually mean? Tolerance can and does come in many forms. In its most basic element it is showing kindness and consideration to others. It also takes into account the differences amongst us within society, such as: socio-economic, ethnic, racial, religious, and even political. As such, to give a gift of tolerance this holiday season we must be cognizant of our surroundings and with those in whom we come into contact. We must remember that not all share the same beliefs and mores as we do, which is completely fine. We must understand that no one person possesses the absolute moral authority. By being aware of this, one can agree to disagree and leave it at that. For the sake of the holiday season and for the goodness towards humanity, we can include everyone in that proverbial social tent. Showing and exhibiting helpfulness can and does go a long way in producing

tolerance. It is many times the small deeds that have the greatest impact. As you are out shopping, ask yourself if you have to be a pushy customer when the checkout lines are not moving to your desired speed? Remember, the sales associates are usually trying their best to facilitate a smooth checkout experience for everyone. Is it really that much of a strain on you to smile and say hello to those you encounter while out and about shopping? The sincere and simple gestures of 'please' and 'thank you' does show that you have respect and tolerance of others. So follow the Golden Rule of treating others how you want to be treated.

### **GIFT OF SAFETY**

The gift of safety is another area to be examined, especially during this busy holiday season. There are many seemingly insignificant steps we can take to protect ourselves and ensure the safety of all those around us. This can be applied at home, work, and driving within town. All would agree that having the merriest and joyous holiday with friends and family is the ultimate goal during this festive season. So take the necessary precautions to ensure that these desired goals are met with no negative effects. What exactly does giving a gift of safety actually mean in practice? We will examine each one in its respective location to understand this better and learn how to apply basic principles to enhance your safety during the season.

## SAFETY AT HOME

One of the scariest events to occur would be to experience a fire, especially made worse during the holidays. On average 210 structure fires happen every year from Christmas trees alone (NFP, 2015). You should be aware of the increased risk of both natural and artificial trees within the home. Focus on the freshness of a natural tree, the certification of an artificial tree, the location where trees are placed in the home, types of lights used on the trees, and turning off the lights when going to bed or leaving your house. Do not pull a Clark Griswold stunt and plug multiple extension cords in to one outlet (Chechik, 1989). This can overload the circuit and become a fire risk.

But safety should and does go beyond this. The wrapped, but as yet unopened, Christmas gifts sitting under the tree can make easy targets if someone only has to look through the window to view them.

The FBI reports that on average 400,000 home burglaries occur between the months of November and December. So be mindful of what you throw away, empty computer and television boxes let would-be thieves know what items are in your home (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2013).

Lastly, if you are going out of town for the holiday, be cautious about what you post to social media apps. This is an easy way to let others know that your house is unoccupied and therefore an easy target. In the end just use a common sense approach to protect yourself and family.

## SAFETY AT WORK

Work locations vary, but some common practical guidelines should be employed to ensure the safety of all. First, do not obstruct fire extinguishers, fire alarms, emergency signs, or exits with holiday decorations. This can create an undue risk on coworkers, clients, and visitors.

One aspect of the holiday season are the holiday office parties. In these there needs to be some consideration for everything from food served, to ensure from allergy reactions, to the consumption of alcohol. The latter is one of the top concerns for most managers. Ensuring that coworkers either have a designated driver or a cab ride home may prevent any tragedies from occurring. Additionally, drinking responsibly will also protect you and your coworkers from embarrassing situations that could have a negative reflection upon you and possibly lead to termination. Even though it is a social setting make sure you are following all of the company's rules and policies.

## SAFETY IN TOWN

There exist conditions that can and do lead to an increase in dangerous driving. It is during the holiday season that the combination of weather, the time of year, and normal driving risk factors see an increase in accidents (Walter, 2012).

A common risk is distracted driving. It can take the form of cell phone calls, text messages, looking for a parking spot, trying to find a particular store, or looking at a GPS map. When you take your primary focus off of driving it increases your chances of encountering an accident. So remember, wait until you are parked or you can have a passenger assist in any of these tasks.

The stress of the holiday season can aid in causing dangerous driving. If you are trying to get somewhere to beat the rush, or finish that last minute shopping it can cause you to increase your speed or take undue risks. Remember, most people are experiencing this same type of pressure with varying degree, but you all are in the same boat. This should be a time of year where you are hyper-aware of your driving and fellow drivers around you.

Weather does have a direct correlation to an increase in driving accidents. If where you live experiences negative weather events, make sure to provide yourself enough time to get to where you are going. Planning ahead and not rushing could be the best approach to driving in inclement weather. Also, keeping a safe following distance from the car in front of you will provide enough time to properly react if the need occurs.

Here are some common driving tips to follow. Use the time and pacing three seconds rule. This is done by finding a fixed object down the road, like a speed limit sign or overpass, and begin counting (one Mississippi, two Mississippi, three Mississippi...) after the car in front reaches the chosen point. If the car you are driving reaches that same location before counting to a specific number then you are following too close. So it is recommended in clear daytime weather driving, you should follow the three seconds rule. In night driving, heavy traffic, or inclement weather you should follow the six seconds rule. This expands the amount of reaction time with the car in front of you. If the weather is extremely poor and you lack a clear line of sight increase the distance to nine seconds. This will provide some of the longest times and distances to react, if the car you are following makes a sudden change of speed or direction.

## A GIFT TO ALL

At the end of the day it is your actions both in personal and professional tolerance and safety that allows us all to experience an enjoyable holiday season. So to ensure this occurs, it is asked that, we all practice giving these two gifts, tolerance and safety to all we encounter. We encourage our employees, clients and the general public to espouse these traits. For us, it is our belief that this is accomplished through the corporate principles of Integrity, Vigilance, and Helpfulness. It is with this thought that we wish you and your family a joyous and safe holiday season... See you in 2016!!