



## **Shop Smart, Stay Safe This Shopping Season**

**Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and the festive shopping rush should be times of excitement, not anxiety. You've worked hard for your money — don't let criminals or carelessness rob you of your joy this shopping season. 24/7 Security Services urges everyone to keep safety and security top of mind. Staying alert and informed will help ensure your shopping experience is both happy and safe.**

### **Safety at the Mall**

South African shopping centres are at their busiest during November and December, making it easy for opportunistic criminals to blend into the crowd. A few smart habits can make all the difference.

- Stay alert** – Awareness is your strongest defence. Distraction, especially with cell phones, can make you an easy target.
- Park wisely** – Choose well-lit parking areas close to entrances or under CCTV surveillance.
- Avoid sitting in your car** – Checking messages or making calls while parked makes you vulnerable. Move off as soon as you're ready.
- Keep valuables out of sight** – Lock handbags, laptops, and shopping bags in the boot before you leave your vehicle.
- Watch out for remote jamming** – Car-jamming is a common tactic. Always double-check that your car is locked manually, even if you do hear the locking sound.
- Limit cash** – Carry only what you need and avoid showing large sums of money when paying.
- Keep your belongings close** – Keep handbags zipped, and wallets and phones out of sight.
- Dress** – Avoid displaying expensive jewellery or watches when shopping.
- Be prepared** – Have your car keys ready as you approach your vehicle so you can get in quickly.
- Ask for help** – Most shopping centres offer a security escort service. If you feel uneasy, request assistance from a guard.



### **Staying Safe Online**

Online shopping continues to grow in popularity, but it's important to remain cautious — cybercriminals are just as busy as shoppers this time of year.

- Shop on secure sites** – Look for a padlock icon in the browser bar and ensure the web address begins with 'https://'. Use only trusted payment platforms.
- Stick to reputable retailers** – Only buy from recognised websites. Be cautious of unfamiliar sites offering unusually low discounts.
- Avoid public Wi-Fi** – Never shop or bank online using open networks in malls or coffee shops; these are easy targets for hackers.
- Be cautious of phishing scams** – Fraudsters often send fake emails or messages that appear legitimate. Avoid clicking on suspicious links.
- Use strong passwords** – Combine uppercase letters, symbols, and numbers to create a secure password of at least eight characters.
- Activate two-factor authentication** – OTPs and authentication apps provide essential extra protection for your accounts.



***Shopping should be fun, festive, and rewarding — not stressful. By taking a few precautions and keeping your wits about you, you can shop with confidence knowing you've done your part to protect yourself and your hard-earned money. Stay alert, stay safe, and enjoy every moment of your festive season.***