

## A Safer Naper --- 24 Days of Safety

This December, the Naperville Police Department's Safer Naper campaign will provide daily seasonal safety tips in the form of a 24 Days of Safety campaign!

Each day, we will focus on a different seasonal safety topic and offer short prevention tips. So, check back on this page regularly or check us out on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/napervillepd](http://www.facebook.com/napervillepd)) or Twitter ([www.twitter.com/napervillepd](http://www.twitter.com/napervillepd)) to catch up and keep up with the daily holiday-related safety tips. Have a safe, healthy and happy holiday season.



### Day 1 – Plan for a Healthy Holiday Season

This year will be unlike any other, so it's important to think ahead and have all the facts when it comes to holiday traditions and travel during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Visit the CDC's website for holiday guidance!

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html)

### **Day 2 - Lock It or Lose It**

- Don't leave vehicles unattended with the doors unlocked, windows down or the keys in them, even in your garage or driveway.
- Always take your car keys with you and lock your car doors.
- Take valuables with you or keep them out of sight by placing them in the trunk or using stow-and-go seating, preferably before arriving at your destination.
- Park in well-lit areas.

### **Day 3 – Internet Shopping Safety**

- Keep current with your software and virus protection.
- Create strong passwords.
- Ignore emails from senders you don't know.
- Use your pop-up blocker.
- Only download files from sites you know.
- Sign up for email/text "transaction alerts" from your bank to keep track of your purchases.

### **Day 4 – Securing Packages on Your Porch**

Prevent thieves from stealing your packages by following these simple tips:

- Schedule packages to arrive when you're home.
- Require signature for delivery – This is particularly helpful when you want to be sure important or valuable items are not left unattended.
- Install security cameras – Be sure it is visible and in working order. Cameras only deter criminals if they know one is present.
- Sign up for delivery alerts – Most major shipping companies offer this service. So, if you are not home, you can contact a friend or family member to retrieve the package as soon as it's delivered.
- Have packages delivered to another location, like a trusted neighbor's house, your work (if allowed) or a smart locker.
- Leave delivery instructions – Request your packages be placed in a less conspicuous spot, such as a side or back door, behind a planter or in another location not visible from the street.

### **Day 5 – Follow the 3 Ws**

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)'s guidance for a safe holiday season includes following the 3 W's – Wash your hands. Watch your distance. Wear your mask.

IDPH stresses that the safest way to celebrate is to stay home and plan virtual gatherings, but those who choose to gather are urged to wear masks, keep their distance from others, limit event sizes, wash their hands frequently, and look out for public health and each other.

*Source: [dph.illinois.gov](http://dph.illinois.gov)*

### **Day 6 – You Drink, You Drive, You Lose**

Every day, almost 30 people in the U.S. die in drunk-driving crashes. That's one person every 50 minutes and more than 10,000 lives each year (NHTSA). Here are some tips to protect yourself and others:

- Plan your safe ride home before you attend a gathering.
- If someone you know has been drinking, do not let that person get behind the wheel. Take their keys and help them arrange a sober ride home.
- If you drink, do not drive for any reason. Call a taxi, a ride-hailing service, or a sober friend.
- If you're hosting a gathering where alcohol will be served, make sure all guests leave with a sober driver.
- Always wear your seat belt—it's your best defense against impaired drivers.

### **Day 7 – Cold Weather Cons**

As the temperature starts to dip, scammers are taking advantage of the cold weather by trying to swindle you out of your money.

- The City of Naperville will never call you and threaten to deactivate your heat or electric service due to a past due bill. Scammers are using the idea of being without heat or electric in the cold as a scare tactic.
- If you are overdue on your utility account, the City of Naperville will send you a correspondence in the mail. In most cases, multiple notifications will be sent. No solicitation of payment is done over the phone.
- Beware of "Spoofing Software" that may falsely display the name and phone number of your utility company on your caller ID.
- Scammers use scare tactics such as intimidation and threats to request payment via hard-to-trace prepaid debit cards (green dot) or ask for your credit card information.

### **Day 8 – Purse/Wallet Safety**

Busy stores with distracted shoppers are prime targets for purse and wallet snatchers. Protect your valuables:

- Always keep your purse closed/zipped.
- Never leave your purse unattended or open in a shopping cart.
- Invest in a crossbody bag that you can wear in front of you.
- Keep your wallet in your front pocket, not the back.

### **Day 9 – 9 PM Routine**

Humans are creatures of habit. Get into the habit each night of making sure you've secured your home and vehicle and taken proactive steps to combat auto thefts and break-ins. The 9 PM Routine empowers residents to develop their own personal security routines by having a designated time to perform these tasks every night. Set a reminder for 9 p.m. to go through the following checklist to make sure your property is secure:

- Remove any valuables from vehicles left outside overnight. Remember, NEVER leave your keys or garage door opener in your vehicle.
- Lock vehicle doors.
- Close the overhead garage door.
- Close and lock all exterior doors and windows. Don't forget to lock the service door from your garage to your house.
- Turn on exterior lights and leave them on until dawn.

## **Day 10 – Winter Driving Tips**

### Stay Alert

- Keep your gas tank close to full.
- If road conditions are hazardous, avoid driving if possible.
- On longer trips, plan enough time to stop to stretch, get something to eat, return calls or text messages, and change drivers or rest if you feel drowsy.

### Avoid Risky Driving Behaviors

- Do not text or engage in any activities that may distract you while driving.
- Obey all posted speed limits, but drive even slower if necessary for weather conditions.
- Drive sober. Alcohol and drugs impair perception, judgment, motor skills, and memory – the skills critical for safe and responsible driving.

### Driving in Winter Conditions

- Drive slowly. It's harder to control or stop your vehicle on a slick or snow-covered surface.
- On the road, increase your following distance enough so that you'll have plenty of time to stop for vehicles ahead of you.
- Know whether your vehicle has an antilock brake system and learn how to use it properly. Antilock brake systems prevent your wheels from locking up during braking. If you have antilock brakes, apply firm, continuous pressure to the brake pedal. If you don't have antilock brakes, you may need to pump your brakes if you feel your wheels starting to lockup.

[Learn more here](#)

## **Day 11 – Gift Card Scams**

Gift cards are for gifts, not for payments. If someone calls with urgent news or a convincing story and then pressures you to pay them by buying a gift card, like an iTunes or Google Play card, and then giving them the codes on the back of the card – stop. It's a scam!

- When purchasing a gift card make sure it does not appear to have been tampered with, or the PIN is exposed.
- Look closely at the sticker covering the security code.
- Don't buy the top gift card right off the rack.
- Register your card (if the retailer offers that option). This makes it easier to track and quickly report any misuse.
- Buy cards directly from the business if possible.
- Beware of bogus gift card ads that pop up on your social media feed and claim to offer exclusive deals online. They may be phony cards.

## **Day 12 – Using Online Marketplaces**

As the popularity of online marketplaces continues to increase, so does our concern for residents' safety when meeting with strangers to complete a transaction that began online.

Please arrange to meet at the Naperville Police Department, 1350 Aurora Ave., to complete these types of transactions! You can use our new dedicated parking spots or our lobby, if it's open. Remember, if someone doesn't agree to meet you at the police department, they're probably not someone you want to be doing business with!

Find more tips at [www.naperville.il.us/internetsafesalezone](http://www.naperville.il.us/internetsafesalezone)

### **Day 13 – Avoid COVID-19 Scams**

- Learn how to tell the difference between a real contact tracer and a scammer. Legitimate tracers need health information, not money or personal financial information.
- Don't respond to texts, emails or calls about checks from the government.
- Ignore offers for miracle treatments or cures. Scammers are selling products to treat or prevent COVID-19 without proof that they work.
- Be wary of ads for test kits. Most test kits being advertised have not been approved by the FDA and aren't necessarily accurate.
- Hang up on robocalls. Scammers are using illegal robocalls to pitch everything from low-priced health insurance to work-at-home schemes.
- Watch for emails claiming to be from the CDC or WHO. Use sites like [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov) and [usa.gov/coronavirus](https://www.usa.gov/coronavirus) to get the latest information. And don't click on links from sources you don't know.
- Do your homework when it comes to donations. Never donate in cash, by gift card, or by wiring money.
- Be wary of vaccine-related scams. Only get a vaccine from an approved medical provider, and don't click on social media posts claiming to sell cures or get you the vaccine before others.

Source: [www.ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams-consumer-advice](https://www.ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams-consumer-advice)

### **Day 14 – Animal Safety Tips**

- Provide a safe haven for your stressed pet to avoid holiday noise and excitement.
- Decorate with pet-safe plants. Many plants such as mistletoe, holly and poinsettias can be toxic to animals.
- Anchor the Christmas tree and avoid using tinsel or edible tree decorations that could be ingested.
- Keep pets away from lit candles.
- Be sure to protect your pets from the outside elements.
- If you suspect animal abuse, cruelty or neglect, call Naperville Animal Crime Stoppers at (630) 420-6006 and leave an anonymous tip.

### **Day 15 – Mental Well-being**

This can be a very tough time of year for many. If you need to, please reach out for help.

**Emergency:** 9-1-1

**Crisis Text Line:** Text 'REACH' to 741741

**Suicide Hotline:** 1-800-273-8255

**Addiction Hotline:** 1-800-662-4357

**Depression Hotline:** 1-877-870-4673

**Eating Disorder Hotline:** 1-844-228-2962

**LGBTQ Support Line:** 1-866-488-7386

**Veteran Crisis Line:** 1-800-273-8255

**Sexual Assault Hotline:** 1-800-656-4673

## **Day 16 – Substance Use/Abuse**

Teens/Children:

Every year thousands of children are hospitalized after taking medicine not meant for them. Teens share stolen prescription drugs and toddlers are tempted by colorful pills that look like candy. Be thoughtful of where you keep your medications in your home. Keep medications in a secure location that is not easily accessible by unintended audiences. Store medications up, away and out of sight of children.

Adults:

Did you know that addiction to drugs or alcohol is a mental illness? Substance use disorder changes normal desires and priorities. It changes normal behaviors and interferes with the ability to work, go to school, and to have good relationships with friends and family. The Naperville Police Department's Connect for Life Program is available for individuals and families struggling with this disease. Contact the Connect for Life Program at (630) 305-7032 or Sergeant Derek Zook at [zookd@naperville.il.us](mailto:zookd@naperville.il.us) for support.

Seniors:

It can be hard to think of our senior loved ones struggling with alcohol or substance use, however, it may be more common than you think. According to the National Institute on Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse (NIAAA), alcohol and prescription drug abuse affects up to 17% of adults over the age of 60. Addiction among seniors is often underestimated and under-diagnosed, preventing this population getting the help they may need.

## **Day 17 – Be Aware of Your Surroundings**

With the hustle and bustle of this time of year, it's important to stay alert, avoid distractions and be aware of your surroundings. By practicing situational awareness, you can avoid being in dangerous situations and even identify criminal behavior. Here are a few tips to help you hone this personal safety skillset:

- **Identify Your Surrounding:** The first step in achieving situational awareness is to become aware of what is around you. Identify the type of environment are you in, large crowd compared to a secluded area. Observe other people and their actions.
- **Trust Your Feelings:** Listen to your gut. When you have a feeling that something is wrong, trust it. It is better to be wrong and safe then ignore the feeling and expose your or your family to danger. If you think a crime is about to be committed, call 9-1-1.
- **Avoid Complacency:** Actively keep yourself in the right mindset. Never assume that because you've done something safely before that nothing will happen this time. Continue to challenge yourself and those around you to be prepared for contingencies. Do a mental check every now and then.
- **Have a Plan:** Talking with your family about what to do in different situations will prepare them for when it happens. Knowing what to do beforehand will allow you to stay calm and better

handle the situation. Create preparedness and response plans with your family to address likely risks.

### **Day 18 – Winter Safety Kit for Cars**

Carry items in your vehicle to handle common winter driving-related tasks, such as cleaning off your windshield, as well as any supplies you might need in an emergency. Keep the following in your vehicle:

- Snow shovel, broom, and ice scraper.
- Abrasive material such as sand or kitty litter, in case your vehicle gets stuck in the snow.
- Jumper cables, flashlight, and warning devices such as flares and emergency markers.
- Blankets for protection from the cold.
- A cell phone with charger, water, food, and any necessary medicine (for longer trips or when driving in lightly populated areas).

### **Day 19 – Report Suspicious Activities**

Public safety and security is everyone's responsibility. If you see suspicious activity, report it to local law enforcement or a person of authority using the "5W's":

**WHO** did you see?

**WHAT** did you see?

**WHEN** did you see it?

**WHERE** did it occur?

**WHY** is it suspicious?

Source: Department of Homeland Security

### **Day 20 – Keep Valuables Out of Sight in Your Vehicle**

Burglaries to motor vehicles are often crimes of opportunity. Be sure to minimize your risk of victimization while you're out shopping by putting valuables in the trunk or using stow-and-go seating, preferably BEFORE arriving at your destination. And, of course, lock your vehicle and take the keys with you!

### **Day 21 – Domestic Violence Resources**

Did you know that many domestic violence service providers report that calls for assistance and services actually decrease during the holiday season? Victims oftentimes feel additional pressures during the holidays to hold their family together (especially for children) so they can experience the magic of the holidays and the normalcy of sharing a meal and opening presents as a family. After the holidays however, there is an increase in calls for assistance and services, so the holidays provide a unique opportunity to share resources and support victims. If you know someone in an abusive relationship:

1. Reinforce that you care for them and are available to listen free from judgement. Make sure you are communicating with them in a way that feels safe for them, as abusers oftentimes may monitor their electronic devices.
2. Offer to be a part of their support network if and when they do decide to leave. Simple gestures like offering to watch children while they attend to other matters or offering to accompany them while they reach out for help can go a long way.

3. Continue to include them in holiday activities even if they decline to attend. Many domestic violence situations include the abuser working to isolate the victim from loved ones, but knowing the invitation is there shows your support.
4. Let the victim know that resources exist (hotlines, shelters, advocates, legal assistance, etc.) and provide them with these supports, but do not dictate if or how they reach out. Victims benefit from re-empowerment and the ability to make their own choices, which is something they don't generally have in their relationship with their abuser.

For more information and resources, visit [www.naperville.il.us/domesticviolence](http://www.naperville.il.us/domesticviolence).

### Day 22 – Keep Valuables Out of Sight at Home

Leaving large electronics, wrapped gifts and other valuables in plain sight can tempt would-be thieves to target your residence. Consider closing the blinds or curtains in first-floor rooms, putting items in an inconspicuous container or stowing valuables in a safe.



### Day 23 – Practice the 3 W's

Whether you're out running last-minute errands or attending a small gathering, please remember that the most effective way to protect yourself and others from becoming ill is to practice the 3 W's – Wash your hands. Watch your distance. Wear your mask.

### Day 24 – Enjoy the Season

No matter what your holiday season ends up looking like this year, we encourage you to take a moment to relax, reflect and count your blessings. Stay safe, stay healthy and stay tuned for 2021's Safer Naperville campaign!