



# KNOW THE RULES...

## SAFETY TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

1. When in a public facility always supervise your children, and **ALWAYS** accompany young children to the restroom. Make certain your children know to stay with you at all times while shopping and always **CHECK FIRST** with you or a trusted adult before they go anywhere. It is important to know where your children are and who they are with at all times.
2. If older children become separated from you while holiday shopping, have them meet you in a predesignated spot such as the sales counter of the store you were in or the mall's information booth. Teach younger children to look for people who may be sources of help within the store or mall such as a uniformed law-enforcement or security officer, store salesperson with a nametag, person with a nametag who is working in the information booth, or mother with children. They should stay close to where they first became separated and **NEVER** leave the store/mall or go to the parking lot to look for you or your vehicle.
3. Make an outing to a mall a "teachable" experience in which children practice checking with you; locating the adults who may be able to help if they need assistance; and, for older children, going to the restroom with a friend. Practice having them **CHECK FIRST** with you before going anywhere within a mall or store. Remember, allowing your children to wear clothing or carry items in public on which their name is displayed may bring about unwelcome attention from inappropriate people looking for a way to start a conversation with your children.
4. Parents and guardians should not leave children alone at public facilities such as video arcades, movie theaters, or playgrounds as a convenient "babysitter" while they are holiday shopping. Never leave children in toy or specialty stores expecting store personnel to supervise and care for your children. They are not trained in this role, and it is not a function of their employment.
5. If you allow your older children to go to the mall or other activities without you, they should **TAKE A FRIEND**. It's more fun and much safer. Older children should check-in with you on a regular basis while they are out. Make certain a clear plan is in place to pick them up including where, what time, and what to do in case of a change in plans.
6. Nothing takes the place of your supervision when you are in a public place with your children. If you are going holiday shopping and feel you will be distracted, make other arrangements for the care of your children. It's easy to get distracted with all the sights, sounds, and crowds of holiday shopping, so make certain your children stay with you at all times.

For more information about child-safety topics, please visit our website or contact us at

**1-800-THE-LOST® (1-800-843-5678)**

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