

Be Smart with Holiday Online Shopping



The holidays are just around the corner. Online sellers and shoppers are both optimistic about the upcoming holiday season. According to Shop.org's eHoliday survey, 68 percent of online retailers say they expect

to see growth of at least 15 percent over last year.

People are more eager to hit the web this holiday season than to go into the malls and deal with the holiday rush. With that beginning said, are you up-to-date on what online sites are safe? How can you tell?

All websites you go to should be PCI Compliant. PCI stands for Payment Card Industry and compliance with the industry standards is a requirement for those that accept the major credit cards and for software providers who have applications which involve the transmission and/or storage of credit card information. If breaches are found on systems that are not PCI compliant, the major credit card companies have the ability to levy significant fines on the offending parties.

Are you not sure if the shopping cart you are in is PCI Compliant? The PCI Security Standards Council maintains a list of licensed shopping carts. Hosted shopping cart developers have to prove their compliance through an assessment with a Council-trained Qualified Security Assessor. Payment associations keep track of hosted shopping carts that have been certified as PCI compliant. Visa, for example, publishes a list of these approved carts.

Does the shopping cart you are purchasing or paying a bill not appear on either one of these lists – you may want to reconsider making that purchase or paying that bill online.

Source: *Btinet.net*

Fire Marshal Urges Holiday Safety

Homes and businesses across South Dakota and western Minnesota have Christmas trees and decorations on display and South Dakota State Fire Marshal Al Christie reminds people to put holiday safety first throughout the season.

"The trees and candles and strings of holiday lights you see this time of year make the season especially merry," Christie said. "But those things can be fire hazards if they aren't handled properly."

Christie offers these tips for making the holiday season safer for everyone:

- If you have a natural tree in your home, check the amount of water in the stand each day. A fresh tree can take in up to a quart of water a day.
- Place the tree away from heat sources such as fireplaces and heaters, and don't place it in an exit path.
- Never use candles on or near a tree. Make sure the lights you use are UL listed and not frayed or damaged.
- Don't use Outdoor lights indoors or Indoor lights outdoors.
- Don't overload electrical circuits. Use approved circuit strips and turn off all Christmas lights before leaving the home or retiring for the evening.
- Put lit candles in glass safety globes and keep lit candles away from drafty windows and doorways.
- Avoid the temptation to burn cardboard boxes or holiday wrapping paper in a fireplace. Those materials burn at very high temperatures. Not all fireplaces are suited to burn those materials.

"And, as always, make sure your smoke alarms are in proper working order and please don't use the batteries from your alarm for new Christmas presents, even for a short time," Christie said. "This is a season of celebration. Following a few simple fire-safety tips can keep it from becoming a time of tragedy."

Source: *South Dakota Department of Public Safety*

Kids' Corner Safety Poster



"Never climb utility poles."

Philomena Goldade, 9 years old

Philomena is the daughter of Joe and Brenda Goldade, Lemmon, S.D. They are members of Grand Electric Cooperative, Bison, S.D.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents.