



As the holiday season approaches, many Alabama consumers will take to the internet and local establishments to begin shopping for gifts. The Attorney General's Consumer Protection Section has developed a list of good tips to keep in mind that can help protect the consumer's identity, property, and safety.

Shopping Online:

- Shop from reputable online sites that you know.
- Never respond to pop up ads.
- If possible, use a credit card versus a debit card when shopping online. Consumers can dispute charges with their credit card company, but using a debit card can give scammers direct access to the consumer's bank account.
- Make sure you are on a secure website before entering your personal information.
- Make sure you know what shipping and processing fees you are paying.
- Make sure you know the website's return policy before placing an order.

Shopping Out and About:

- Never carry large amounts of cash.
- Only carry the credit cards you intend to use.
- Watch out for shoulder surfers while at the checkout.
- Place packages in the trunk or out of site while shopping.
- Never travel with a purse or wallet lying on your seat. It takes less than 10 seconds at a red light for someone to break your window and take your belongings.
- Always check the store's return policy.
- Never talk to strangers that approach you in the parking lot.

Identity thieves and scammers prey on innocent consumers during the holiday season, protect yourself. If you feel at any time that you are not safe call 911, and report any suspicious activity to your local law enforcement.