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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TOWN OF WAKE FOREST URGES HOLIDAY SAFETY

WAKE FOREST, NC – December 1, 2008 –The holidays are a joyous time for most people, yet fires and crime are a constant threat. The [Town of Wake Forest](#) wants to help ensure that the holidays remain merry for everyone by stressing the following crime prevention and fire safety tips:

Holiday Shopping

- Don't carry large amounts of cash. Never display the cash you carry.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Avoid dark or secluded areas where you could become a crime victim. Park in well-lit areas as close as possible to an entrance.
- Put your packages in the trunk. Do not place packages on the seat or in the floor of your vehicle in view of prying eyes.
- Keep your vehicle locked at all times.
- Keep your purse closed and carry it securely under your arm. Never place your purse on a counter, leave it in your shopping cart or let your children carry it.

Holiday Traveling

- Ask a neighbor to watch your home while you are away, and to pick up mail and package deliveries. Make sure neighbors have a phone number, so they can reach you in case of an emergency.
- Set automatic timers to activate your lights and other appliances to give your home an occupied look.
- Be sure your home is locked and that the shades, blinds and draperies are in their normal position.

Home for the Holidays

- Do not place gifts or other valuables where they can be seen by someone looking in from outside your home.
- Keep doors and deadbolts locked at all times – even when someone is home.
- Never let a stranger inside your home.
- Do not leave notes outside to indicate that you are away from home.

- Don't advertise your new microwave, stereo or TV by leaving the empty boxes at the curb. Put discarded gift boxes in trash bags.
- A key chain whistle or panic alarm, and deadbolt locks make great holiday gifts.

Christmas Tree Safety

- Always select a fresh Christmas tree.
- Put the tree in water immediately to help prevent it from drying out too quickly.
- Use the proper Christmas tree lights. Some lights are designed for outdoor use only.
- All lights should be approved by an independent testing laboratory.
- Never use electric lights with a metal tree.

Heaters

- Keep space heaters at least three feet away from furniture, bedding, walls, clothing and other items that can burn.
- Always use the proper fuel for liquid-fueled heaters. Be sure they are vented properly and refill them only in a well-ventilated area when they are cool.
- Make sure the type of heater you are using is legal in your area and bears the seal of an independent testing laboratory.
- Never use extension cords with electric space heaters.

Fireplaces

- Be careful when emptying fireplace ashes. Place them in a nonflammable container away from your residence.
- Do not burn the wrappings from holiday packages in your fireplace.
- Have your chimney inspected by a professional at least once a year and have it cleaned if necessary.
- Always use a fire screen.

Candles

- Never use candles or any type of open flame near Christmas trees, wreaths, curtains, combustible decorations or displays.
- Don't leave candles burning unattended or within the reach of small children.
- Keep all matches and lighters out of the reach of small children. Use only child resistant lighters, keep matches in a locked cabinet and teach children to stay away from candles, fireplaces and space heaters.

Safe Holiday Parties

- Use only flame retardant materials for costumes and decorations.
- Check your home thoroughly after holiday parties where guests have been smoking. If dropped under furniture or behind upholstery cushions, a cigarette can smolder for hours before catching fire.
- Use deep, non-tipping ashtrays and keep a close watch on anyone who is drinking alcohol and smoking.

Fire-Safe Gifts

- When buying children's presents, avoid toys made from highly flammable materials.
- Make sure all electrical toys bear the label of an independent testing laboratory.
- Smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers make great holiday gifts.

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For more information about the [Town of Wake Forest](#), contact Public Information Officer [Bill Crabtree](#) at (919) 554-6196.