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Holiday Shopping Safety Tips from Universal Services of America

SANTA ANA, California (November 18, 2009) – Universal Services of America, the largest provider of security services to the commercial real estate market in Arizona, California, Colorado and Washington, is offering tips to consumers regarding holiday shopping safety and security at stores and online. Economic woes and job uncertainty will undoubtedly make this holiday season more stressful and increase the potential for crime, theft and other fraud. Millions of Americans will be hitting the stores during the next two months, starting with the busiest shopping day of the year—the Friday after Thanksgiving. To help keep your holidays safe and happy, Universal offers the following tips for mall and online shoppers.

Shopping in Stores:

- Stay alert and be aware of your surroundings
- Carry your purse close to your body and your wallet in an inside or zippered pocket
- Never leave your purse unattended in a shopping cart, on a countertop or in your car
- Don't carry large amounts of cash and minimize the number of debit or credit cards you carry
- Pay by credit card, rather than check/debit card, to reduce the risk of funds being taken from your bank account; keep all receipts and compare them to your monthly credit card statements
- Park your car close to your destination and hide any packages in the trunk
- Try to shop during daylight hours and if you do shop at night, park in a well-lit area
- When returning to your vehicle, keep your keys out and lock your doors as soon as you're inside
- Shop with others whenever possible; if shopping with children, make sure they know what to do if they become separated from you
- Report suspicious activity to store/mall security or law enforcement

Online Shopping:

- Research businesses regarding their past performances and financial stability
- Obtain a phone number, address and/or other contact information to resolve problems
- Never provide any personal information not necessary to make your purchase
- Conduct transactions on a secure server only: look for the pad-lock device on the browser's status bar. Also, the URL should change from http to https when asked for payment information
- Have packages delivered to an address where they won't be left unattended
- Read the site's privacy policy to learn how it uses and shares your personal information
- Understand return policies, shipping costs and other policies before you buy; only shop with companies that offer a guarantee and/or warranty
- Secure your computer with anti-virus/spyware software and firewalls that are updated regularly
- Save records of your online transactions, including the product description and price, online receipt and copies of any emails you exchange with the seller
- Review your credit card statements to make sure there aren't any unauthorized charges

For more security tips, visit: <http://www.universalpro.com/SecurityUpdates.html>

About Universal Services of America

Founded in 1965, **Universal Services of America** combines tradition with advanced technology to provide clients unmatched security protection, systems, fire/life safety and building maintenance services. Universal provides a full range of building



services throughout Arizona, California, Colorado and Washington, and includes Universal Protection Service, Universal Building Maintenance, Universal Protection Security Systems and Universal Fire/Life Safety Services. (State Licenses: 1003458, 14417, 1025514, 0600, 58361). Visit us at: <http://www.universalpro.com>.