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**Date: 12/8/17****NEWS RELEASE****NR# 17-78**

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**NEWS RELEASE****SCSO kicks off holiday safety operation**

Seminole Co. (Dec. 8, 2017) – The Seminole County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) today announced the start of Operation Save Christmas – a holiday safety operation designed to stop retail theft and economic crime, and prevent burglaries. The operations will take place over the next month with an increased focus on preventing and intercepting crime in commercial and residential areas across the county.

In addition to enforcement efforts, SCSO will distribute holiday door hangers and greeting cards. The greeting card is a traditional holiday poem with a fun twist to deliver crime prevention tips and also includes a list of our year-round safety services.

**Here are some tips to help keep you and your family safe this holiday season:**

- If you're heading out of town for the holidays, be sure your home appears occupied. Place lights on timers, and ask your neighbor to park in your driveway and pickup mail.
- Request a free "[House Watch](#)" from the Sheriff's Office. While you're away, SCSO will send a deputy to regularly check on your home. Call (407) 665-6650 to schedule this service.
- Remember to always keep your garage door down. An open door is an open invitation for criminals.
- After the holidays, don't leave empty boxes from TVs, electronics, and other new purchases by the curb.
- There is safety in numbers so shop with a friend or in a group, and don't let your cell phone be a distraction while you are out and about.
- If shopping with kids, have a plan in case you get separated. For older children, have a central meeting spot designated. For the younger children, teach them to go to a store clerk or security guard if you get separated. Be sure they know your name, cell phone number, and their address.
- Remember to LOCK YOUR CAR AND TAKE YOUR STUFF! Don't be a victim of vehicle burglary - always lock your car. Remove valuables and items with personal information such as wallets, purses, cell phones, check books and any electronic devices.
- When shopping online, only use trusted websites. Make sure the websites are secure by looking for the icon of a locked padlock which typically appears in the status bar at the bottom of your web browser or next to the URL in the address bar.
- Be sure to arrange package deliveries during to your home when you are there or arrange for someone to pick them up and hold them for you until you get home.
- Make a New Year's resolution to bolster your home against break-ins. Contact the Sheriff's Office for a free and confidential [Home Security Assessment](#). We'll send a certified crime prevention specialist to your home to provide you with recommendations regarding your locks, lighting, and landscaping.

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