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Shopping malls are soft targets for terrorist attacks on Black Friday

BY: Justin Moore**POSTED:** 12:05 PM, Nov 16, 2016**UPDATED:** 6:05 PM, Nov 16, 2016[Share Article](#)

CHEEKTOWAGA, N.Y.(WKBW) - Millions of Americans will pack shopping centers, movie theaters, and event sporting events on Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving.

With so many massive unorganized crowds gathered, law enforcement agencies consider these venues soft targets for terrorist attacks.

Steve MacMartin, assistant professor and director of the Medaille College Bachelor's degree program in Homeland Security said Black Friday would make for an opportune day for terrorists to target the masses.

“It's talked about in hushed tones. I think one of the worse fears of law enforcement, when I was working(Homeland Security), we discussed possible problems. One of the worse fears is an attack on a soft target, during something like Black Friday, ” MacMartin said.

In fact, ISIS has already singled out the 2016 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade as an attack target.

“This is a post 9/11 world. Unfortunately things are different now than they were before. Your chance of being involved in a terrorist attack is not great. But it doesn't

WKBW Take much to raise your personal security just a little bit, and make yourself safer,”
MacMartin said.

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MacMartin said there are other terrorist groups besides ISIS, some even domestic who are capable of attacks that could hurt the U.S. Commerce.

So far, no credible Black Friday terrorist threats have been reported in Western New York.

But Cheektowaga Police say they are preparing as best as they can in case something would ever happen. Also, expect more Cheektowaga Police Officers patrolling on Black Friday.

“We just want people to be vigilant. We are always out on guard. We never rule out the possibility of anytime of terrorism,” Assistant Chief for Cheektowaga Police Department, Jim Speyer said.

However, the chief said their biggest issues on Black Friday are people fighting over parking spaces, scams, vehicle burglaries, and shoplifting.

“If you see something, say something,” Speyer said.

Here are a few tips, if you’re planning to be out on Black Friday.

1. If you’re going somewhere(airport,mall, theater, etc.) lines of people will form, get there early, to avoid lines.
2. Pay attention to your surroundings and the people around you.
3. Try not to let yourself get trapped in the middle of large crowds.
4. Always look for exits, just in case of an emergency.

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