** NEWS RELEASE**

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**TIPS FOR A SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL CYBER MONDAY**

*Cook County’s Chief Information Security Officer’s Advice for Online Shoppers*

Cyber Monday can be a welcome alternative to the crowded parking lots, long checkout lines and the general hassle shoppers face on Black Friday. But it is not without its pitfalls. Cyber criminals work hard to trick consumers into divulging sensitive information. But there are basic steps online shoppers can take to remain secure online.

Ricardo Lafosse, Chief Information Security Officer at Cook County’s Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, has tips for consumers who choose to do their holiday shopping from the comfort of their homes:

* Ensure antivirus is installed and up to date
* Ensure when submitting payment information that your connection is secure (e.g. padlock, SSL)
* Always use strong passwords
* Do not use the same password for all logins
* During the holiday season be aware of “phishing” campaigns; do not open unknown emails
* Do not utilize public Wi-Fi when shopping online or accessing sensitive information
* If the price is too good to be true online, do not move forward without validating
* Try to use one-time credit cards or Apple Pay/Google Wallet for purchases
* Keep a close eye on credit card statements

For more tips and to interview Lafosse, media may contact Natalia Derevyanny at [natalia.derevyanny@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:natalia.derevyanny@cookcountyil.gov) or 312.718.4125.

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The Cook County Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management integrates first responders, their departments and resources from 134 Cook County municipalities, and serves as the central agency in Cook County for coordinating efforts to prevent, protect against, mitigate the effects of, respond to, and recover from all incidents, whether man-made or natural. For more information, visit our website at [www.cookcountyhomelandsecurity.org](http://www.cookcountyhomelandsecurity.org).