

## **IPSO Advises Consumers to Stay Safe during the Christmas Shopping Period**

*Issued by the Irish Payment Services Organisation Ltd*

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Consumers in Ireland are each set to spend an average of €1,354<sup>1</sup> on Christmas shopping this year. With many large retailers already beginning their sales and consumers flocking to the shops in their thousands, the Irish Payment Services Organisation (IPSO) reminds consumers that the most convenient and safer way to shop is using a payment card.

IPSO advises consumers to avoid carrying large amounts of cash when Christmas shopping and to use debit cards instead. It is safer to leave funds in your current account until you are ready to use them. Using debit cards also saves people having to queue needlessly at ATMs - which can be particularly uncomfortable during the Irish winter months!

Commenting today, Úna Dillon, Head of Card Services and Communications stated that *'Payment cards offer convenience, speed and access to services which other payment options cannot necessarily provide. Irish debit cards such as Laser Card and Visa Debit provide instant access to whatever is in your current account whenever and you can get Cashback at most outlets, to tide you over for those few locations where payment cards are not accepted.'*

### **Useful Tips for Safe & Enjoyable Christmas Shopping:**

1. Work out in advance the amount you can afford to spend and stick to it
2. Save your receipts – for returns and for checking against your bank statements
3. While credit cards offer an invaluable immediate source of finance, IPSO reminds card holders to use payment cards sensibly. With a debit card,

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Deloitte, Annual Christmas Spending Survey 2008

- you can spend only the funds available in your current account – which can help protect you from incurring unwanted debt
4. Avoid carrying around large amounts of cash
  5. Check your statements regularly and be sure to contact your bank to investigate any transactions that you don't recognise
  6. Avoid pick-pockets. Wear your handbag towards the front of your body and keep it zipped or fastened
  7. Be sure to check refund and return policies before making purchases
  8. Report lost or stolen payment cards as soon as you discover them missing
  9. **Most importantly** – cover your PIN with your free hand when keying it in at the point of sale. Never disclose your PIN to anyone and never write it down

Today, more than three million debit cards are used by Irish consumers and approximately 350 debit card transactions are processed every minute. Debit cards issued in Ireland include the long standing Laser Card and now Visa Debit and Maestro. Latest market research<sup>2</sup> shows that the number of people using a debit card doubled between 2006 and 2008. Debit cards are becoming the favoured payment method for retailers and consumers in Ireland while use of cash and cheques is becoming a thing of the past.

For further information, photographic material or interview, please contact:  
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<sup>2</sup> Source: Marketing Partners, 2008