

Hills woman charged with leaving baby alone

BY DAN WEST
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A 35-year-old Farmington Hills woman is scheduled to face a district court judge Wednesday after receiving a ticket for allegedly leaving her 18-month-old son alone in a car at the Gateway Center parking lot.

The woman, police said, could be ordered to pay a \$100 fine from one of the 48th District Court judges in Bloomfield Hills. The misdemeanor charge of leaving a child inside an unattended vehicle also carries a potential maximum jail sentence of up to 90 days.

"We're not saying she's a bad mother," said Lt. Carl Fuhs, spokesman for West Bloomfield police. "It's just something that happens, but it's a violation."

Fuhs said police were called shortly before 6 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 30, when a man parked his vehicle next to a 1995 Saab with a toddler sleeping in a baby chair in the back seat. The man feared for the baby's safety because the temperature at the time was under 20 degrees.

When police arrived at the Gateway Center, at the corner of 14 Mile and Orchard Lake roads, they asked Whole Foods Market staff to page the owner of the car.

The woman, Fuhs said, responded immediately, saying she was in the store for 10 minutes. She said she left her son in the car because she wasn't going to be in the store long and she didn't want to awaken him.

The toddler, police said, was not harmed. "A lot of people leave their vehicle running with their children in it as they run into the store to get something quickly," Fuhs said. "That's a violation of the law, a law that ensures children's safety."

Sears from page A1

Reporters inquiring to the West Bloomfield hardware store were referred to the Sears corporate office in Hoffman Estates, Ill.

A call to the Sears store in Farmington Hills was answered by a tape saying the local number had been disconnected. A sign in the window said the store would be selling out stock in a clearance sale this week.

Nicholson wouldn't disclose the locations the company was eyeing for possible new hardware store openings, saying the company was still negotiating real estate terms in those areas.

The West Bloomfield and Farmington Hills stores were the only Sears operations to close in Michigan. The company also announced the closing of four of its full-line department stores nationwide last week.

About 2,400 Sears employees will lose their jobs, according to published reports from Associated Press.

The closings were announced as Sears released its monthly sales update showing a 1.1-percent decline in revenues from comparable domestic stores during the holiday period — \$4.42 billion for the five weeks ended Dec. 30.

"Like other retailers, general industry softness and difficult weather conditions dampened our holiday season sales," said Alan Lacy, Sears' new chairman and chief executive officer.

Sears also signaled it may exit the termite-pest control business. The company said it is taking a one-time charge of about \$115 million in the fourth quarter due to Sears Termite and Pest Control, citing continuing losses.

Sears has struggled with apparel sales for years, but despite weak holiday numbers, the company said sales of appliances, sporting goods, lawn and garden items, footwear and home fashions were all strong over the holidays, while Sears Tire Guard and The Great Indoors both showed double-digit increases.

Sears stock rose 94 cents to \$36.87 Thursday afternoon on the New York Stock Exchange. On the Net: www.sears.com

—by staff writer Lee Snider and from Associated Press reports

Reward from page A1

They pay a reward if the robber is arrested and indicted. The suspect may or may not be convicted in order for the reward to be paid, Rolph said.

"We used to run ads it seems every other month. Last year, we only had to run ads three times," Rolph said.

The reward is paid based on information from law enforcement officers; no request for rewards can come from individual

als, Rolph said.

Anyone with information can call the Hills police at (248) 473-9695 or the FBI field office (McNamara Building in Detroit) at (313) 965-2323.

—Staff writer Doug Johnson contributed to this report

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