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UPDATE: How much to tip everyone for the holidays

12/15/13 7:46 AM ET (MarketWatch)

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By Catey Hill

The purpose of holiday tipping is to "show people who serve you year-round how much you care," says advice columnist April Masini. You can show that appreciation with cash, a present or even just a handwritten card if money is tight. In fact, it's important to remember that you "don't have to do any holiday tipping," says Pamela Eyring, the president of etiquette school The Protocol School of Washington.

But if you do intend to tip, here are some things to keep in mind. In general, it is acceptable to give cash to people who work for tips year-round, like hairstylists, bartenders or masseuses, though many others are of course happy to receive cash as well, says Eyring. She adds that if you're going to give someone less than \$20, it's preferable to give a gift card or small gift rather than the cash. Finally, include "a nice note so that the person you're tipping knows that the gift is from you -- and say something personal so that they feel appreciated," Masini says.

Here's a breakdown of who you should tip this holiday season.

-- By Catey Hill

-Catey Hill; 415-439-6400; AskNewswires@dowjones.com

Teachers and child-care providers

Consider giving your child's regular baby sitter a tip of one evening's pay, plus a small gift from your child, says Constance Hoffman, the owner of St. Louis-based etiquette firm Social and Business Graces and author of "Tips on Tipping." The nanny or au pair gets more: The au pair might get one week's pay or a gift from Mom and Dad, plus a small gift from your child; the nanny should get one or more week's pay and a small gift from the child, she says. Day-care providers should each get \$20 to \$70 and a small gift from the child. Your child's teacher should receive a gift from your child as well, as long as school policy allows this, as should their coaches, tutors, music teachers and sports or other activity instructors, says Hoffman. This last group should not receive cash, says Masini, but something small like homemade cookies or a card.

-Catey Hill; 415-439-6400; AskNewswires@dowjones.com

Hairstylists, manicurists, and masseurs

If you have a regular hairdresser, consider tipping her between \$20 and \$100, depending on how often you see her and what services she performs, says Masini. "Someone who encourages you to come in for a free trim if your cut doesn't grow in the way you like, or does little things for you at no charge during the year, like adding extra conditioning treatments at no charge, or giving you a free pass for canceling at the last minute -- should get more," she adds. Masini says that if your hairstylist's assistant also regularly helps you, you may want to get her something small as well, like a candle, jam or \$10 to \$20. The regular manicurist should get about \$10 to \$50 or the cost of one session plus a small gift, and the massage therapist should get between \$50 and \$100 or the cost of one session, says Hoffman.

-Catey Hill; 415-439-6400; AskNewswires@dowjones.com

Gym staff

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Gym staff also often deserve a little extra, experts say. Eyring recommends giving your personal trainer between \$25 and \$50, depending on how often you see her. She adds that you should also consider giving a small gift or gift card to gym staff who regularly help you out (for example, someone who constantly brings you fresh towels or water).

-Catey Hill; 415-439-6400; AskNews@dwjones.com

Home and car-related services

Eyring suggests that you give the housekeeper about \$50, or more if he or she comes to you more frequently than twice a week. Hoffman says that parking attendants (for those who regularly use one) should get about \$10 to \$35. Gardeners and pool maintenance staff should also get tipped, typically between \$20 and \$50 each, experts say.

If you live in an apartment, you'll likely have a different set of people to tip. The doormen should get between \$25 and \$100 apiece, the porters and handymen \$10 and \$50 each and the elevator operator \$15 to \$40 each, says Hoffman -- all depending on how often you interact with them. (Those who live in pricey cities like New York and San Francisco will likely want to tip on the higher end, says Eyring.) Don't forget the super or custodian either, who should get \$50 to \$300 apiece; tip more if there's no doorman and the service has been particularly attentive, but tip less if you tip throughout the year, says Hoffman.

-Catey Hill; 415-439-6400; AskNews@dwjones.com

Home-delivery services

The people who deliver your mail and packages have to play by a different set of tipping rules than other professionals. Your regular USPS mail carrier isn't allowed to get cash tips (or checks or gift cards, which can be exchanged for cash) and cannot accept gifts worth more than \$20. Give your regular FedEx and UPS workers a small gift like a gift card to a local restaurant like Moe's or Panera Bread since they usually don't have much time for lunch, says Eyring. You should also consider tipping the newspaper delivery person \$15 to \$20 if you get daily delivery and \$5 to \$15 if just on weekends, says

Hoffman.

-Catey Hill; 415-439-6400; AskNews@dwjones.com

Pet care

If you have a regular dog walker, groomer or pet sitter, it's nice to give her a little extra for the holidays. Hoffman says that groomers should get a small gift plus 1/4 to 1/2 the cost of one session. A dog walker or pet sitter (assuming she's regular) should get roughly one week's pay (a gift is optional).

-Catey Hill; 415-439-6400; AskNews@dwjones.com

Elder care

If you employ a senior care aide, typically a week's salary and a nice thank-you note is an appropriate tip for the holidays, says Jody Gastfriend, the vice president of senior care services at Care.com. But, Gastfriend adds, if you have hired a senior care aide from an agency, check on the company policy first, as there may be no tipping or personal gifts allowed. "A donation to the agency in honor of the caregiver might be a nice gesture of appreciation if that's the case," she says. For nursing home staff, a platter of fruit, chocolates, or other holiday goodies, along with a note of thanks is a nice gesture, and for non-profit facilities, a donation can often be made in honor of the staff, she adds.

-Catey Hill; 415-439-6400; AskNews@dwjones.com

Other

There are a few other people you should consider tipping or giving a gift to if you regularly interact with them. Eyring says that if you're a regular at a doctor's office and the staff -- like the receptionist or physician's assistant -- is especially kind to you, consider giving them a gift card or small gift to say thanks. Also give a waiter or bartender who serves you regularly a tip of \$20 or more. If you're a frequent traveler, you may want to reward hotel concierges and service staff that you interact with throughout the year with a gift or tip worth at least \$20, she says.

-Catey Hill; 415-439-6400; AskNews@dwjones.com

(END) Dow Jones Newswires

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