



Tarpon Springs Police Department

Building a Better Future Through Excellence in Policing



Dec 2017

Crime Watch Newsletter

Drinking and Driving Can Ruin Your Holidays

There is definitely an increase in the number of DUI arrests during the holiday season—from November 24th through January 1st—because of the increase in parties and drinking as well as more law enforcement officers stepping up DUI enforcement efforts. In the state of Florida, law enforcement agencies increase their DUI saturation patrols and checkpoints, knowing there are likely more people on the highways after potentially having one too many and a celebration or get-together.

The percentage of highway deaths which are directly related to alcohol spikes every year from Thanksgiving through New Year's Day, according to Mothers Against Drunk Driving. New Year's Eve, in particular, sees a very large increase in alcohol-related highway deaths. Safe Auto found that between 2008 and 2012 there were the highest percentage of alcohol-related deaths on January 1st, compared to other days and holidays. The NHTSA found that two to three times more people die in alcohol related crashes between Christmas and New Year's than during comparable periods in the remainder of the year. The U.S. Department of Transportation reports that 300 Americans die annually in the days surrounding the Christmas and New Year's holidays, with an average of 27 people being killed every day during December as a direct result of a drunk-driving accident. Many people who don't normally drink, drink during the holidays. Because they have a lower tolerance for alcohol, they can misjudge their ability to drive. Those who do normally drink, may drink more simply because others are drinking.

Also, do not forget that in the state of Florida, it is illegal to possess an open container of alcohol, whether the vehicle is stopped or in motion. The holidays should be a joyous time of year, so do not take any chances on a DUI or a serious accident.



**TARPON SPRINGS POLICE
DEPARTMENT WOULD
LIKE TO WISH YOU ALL A
HAPPY AND SAFE
HOLIDAY SEASON.**

Page 2 : Holiday Scams

Page 3: Shopping Safety Tips/Fire Safety tip

Page 4: Things to Do



285

12/21/14

With the U.S. economy much improved, this year's Christmas season is expected to be one of the best in years, and with the advance of digital technology, smartphones will be a key buying method for many consumers.

Put those elements together and you have the latest "off the press" scam – the use of phony text messages and Whatsapp messages to spread malware, ransomware, and general misery. According to one study, one in every 25 apps supposedly issued by retailers especially for Black Friday were fraudulent – researchers found no fewer than 32,000 phony apps — delivering not news of a special "secret sale" but malware that could steal your credit card information, lock up your device in a ransomware scam, or unleash a malware agent on a corporate server if your device connects to the company's network.

Cybercriminals are set up make up to \$1 billion this year using an array of phony deals and online scams, according to the BI; a report from ACI Worldwide, meanwhile, predicts that online fraud attempts will rise 43 percent during this year's holiday season.

Here are some of the most common scams that can trick even the smartest of us at this time of year:

1. The online secret shopper: The old "secret shopper" scam is back this year with a new online variation. As a secret shopper, victims are supplied with gift cards they can use to go shopping "on assignment," evaluating a site's customer service, delivery, and the like. As a reward, you get to keep the items you order, and/or actually get paid for your work.

Of course, if there is such as thing as an "online secret shopper," you can bet companies are not recruiting shoppers via random email or Twitter messages. To participate you have to hand over personal details, including bank account info, in order to allow for the transfer of your "salary." Needless to say, once you've handed that information over, the scammers cut off communication and use your details to apply for loans or credit cards – or sell it to other scammers who do that.

What to do: Unless you're an employee of an organization that does this on a regular basis and/or the web site in question, just ignore any secret shopper missives.

2. Amazon/iTunes/Wal-Mart/Costco gift cards: Microsoft's Bill Gates once gave away thousands of dollars to random email addresses, but in these tough economic times, scammers have downgraded to just a gift card, worth maybe \$100. Times are tough enough, however, that even that paltry sum is enough to get the juices flowing among many victims as they click on the offered link in order to apply. Part of the genius of this scam is that the user may actually believe they have a gift card coming, because they are such good customers of Amazon/Apple etc.

Once you click on a link, you'll likely be taken to what appears to be an empty web site – except it isn't empty. The site will have already connected with your device long enough to dump a piece of malware on it that will eventually open up a communication channel with a remote command and control server. The hackers behind this site can then scan your device for useful information, credit card numbers, or other valuable data.

What to do: Although it's tempting to believe you are a "special" customer being rewarded for your loyalty, the chances of any of these companies offering a reward in this manner is minimal. If Amazon wants to give its customers a bonus, it has many other ways to do it.

3. Fake charities: After spending hundreds, if not thousands of dollars on gifts, meals, theater tickets, and the other appurtenances of the holiday season, it would take a particularly stone-hearted individual to resist giving to those in need — especially if the organization asking for the money rings a bell, with a name sounding like one that advertises on TV. Who, for example, wouldn't want to help kids suffering from terminal cancer to visit Disney World or the Superbowl? That's what the Make-A-Wish Foundation does. But there are many other charities with very similar names yet different motives. Instead of Make-A-Wish, a phony charity email scam would feature an appeal for the Children's National Wish Foundation, with a link for donors to click on. Once clicked, the link may distribute malware and/or collect personal or credit card information.

What to do: It takes a tough bird to resist heart-wrenching pleas for help, so for donors who are motivated to pony up, the best move is to avoid clicking on a link altogether and move your surfing to the site of the charity in question. By typing the verified address into a browser's address bar, you'll know you're getting to the right site.

4. "Classic" Phishing/Spear-phishing: Black Friday/Cyber Monday online sales exceeded \$12 billion last year, and eight e-commerce sites were responsible for nearly 60 percent of those sales, so the chances are pretty good that anyone who bought something online made purchases at Amazon, Wal-Mart, Target, Macy's, and the others that topped e-commerce sales lists.

That concentration is good news for hackers running a spear-phishing campaign. All they have to do is flood email boxes with messages telling customers there is a problem with their order at one of these sites and that they need to log in and provide credit card data, shipping information, etc. If you didn't shop at Macys.com, you probably wouldn't click on a link or open an attachment in an email. But if you get one from Target.com, a site you did shop at, chances are much greater you will click — and submit your information, as requested.

The following tips can help you be more careful, prepared and aware during the holiday season..

Try to shop during the day, but if you do shop at night, do not do it alone.

- Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- Do not carry a purse or wallet, if possible. Consider bringing a security travel pouch instead.
- Always carry your driver's license or identification along with necessary cash, checks and/or a credit card you expect to use.
- Recognize when you are rushed, distracted and stressed out, and [stay alert](#) to what is going on around you.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.
- Pay for purchases with a check or credit card when possible.
- Keep cash in your front pocket.
- If you discover that a credit card is missing, notify the credit card company as soon as possible. Don't assume that you misplaced it and will find it later.
- Keep a record of all of your credit card numbers in a safe place at home.
- Be extra careful if you do carry a wallet or purse. They are the prime targets of criminals in crowded shopping areas, terminals, bus stops, on buses and other rapid transit.
- Avoid overloading yourself with packages. It is important to have clear visibility and freedom of motion if you are approached.
- Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason. At this time of year, con-artists may try various methods of distracting you, including working in teams, with the intention of taking your money or belongings.



Space Heaters

Do not use an extension cord or power strip, which could overheat and result in a fire. Do not plug any other electrical devices into the same outlet as the heater. Place space heaters on level, flat surfaces. Never place heaters on cabinets, tables, furniture, or carpet, which can overheat and start a fire.

THINGS TO DO IN TARPON SPRINGS

WINTER BREAK SCHOOLS OUT

Tarpon Recreation Department

Let your kids spend the day with us playing games, doing arts & crafts and making new friends

December 27th, 28th, 29th, January 2nd, 3rd and 4th

7:30am-6pm

\$20 per day or \$100 for six days

SAINT NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

Schedule of Events:

Saturday, January 6

Orthros - 8:00am

Liturgy - 9:30am

Greater Blessing of Waters (Cathedral) - 11:30am

Procession to Spring Bayou - 12:15pm

Blessing of the Bayou and Casting of the Cross - 1:00 pm

MOVIES AT CRAIG PARK

The Tarpon Springs Recreation Department will be hosting monthly Movies in Craig Park. Grab your lawn chairs and come enjoy the show. Popcorn and other concessions will be available. Call for movie listings 727-942-5628.

Movies begin at Dusk

Friday, January 26



TARPON SPRINGS POLICE DEPT.

444 SOUTH HUEY AVENUE

TARPON SPRINGS, 34689

EMERGENCY # 911

NON EMERGENCY:

(727) 938-2849

CRIME PREVENTION :

(727) 937-8753

WE ARE ON THE WEB AT

WWW.TSPD.US

“LIKE” US ON FACEBOOK

