



January 2019

Tarpon Springs Police Department

Building a Better Future Through Excellence in Policing

Crime Watch Newsletter



Human Trafficking Prevention Month

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—January is Human Trafficking Prevention Month, and today Attorney General Ashley Moody is raising awareness to fight human trafficking. Attorney General Moody encourages all Floridians to take an active role to help combat this modern-day slavery.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Human trafficking is a plague that we cannot give up on combating in our state and nationwide. It is appalling anyone would engage in acts that take away people’s basic human rights. As your Attorney General and Chair of the Statewide Council on Human Trafficking, I will continue to work with federal, state and local partners to continue the fight to end human trafficking.”

Human trafficking is a form of slavery that encompasses trading humans for commercial sex trafficking, exposure and forced labor. According to the International Labor Organization, for every 1,000 people in the world, more than five victims endure modern slavery. As of June 30, 2018, Florida ranked third highest in the number of human trafficking calls through the National Human Trafficking Hotline for the year.

Attorney General Moody asks Floridians to take an active role in this fight by spotting possible human trafficking signs, including:

- Physical injuries, such as burns, dental issues, disorientation, scars, tattoos, etc.;
- Individuals displaying fear, anxiousness, paranoia or that are reluctant to discuss injuries;
- Speaking as if coached and allowing someone else to speak; and
- Suffering from drug addiction, infections or sleep deprivation.

If anyone suspects or witnesses an occurrence of human trafficking, please contact local law enforcement or call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1(888) 373-7888.



**HAPPY
VALENTINE'S
DAY
FROM
TSPD!**

PAGE 2

Filing Taxes Safely

PAGE 3

Taxes Online Continued-
Fire Safety Tip

PAGE 4

Things to do

Before Filing Taxes Online

2

Step 1: Give Your Computer A Spring Cleaning Before Starting

We spend so much time online surfing different websites these days that it can be hard to know what's penetrating our defenses and what is being filtered out. When you start e-filing your taxes, programs such as keyloggers, backdoors, and other hacks can send your information to fraudsters without you even realizing they're there. This isn't an uncommon problem, either, as nearly 90% of US home computers have at some point been infected with spyware.

Your first step, before inputting your first zero on your forms, should be to perform a deep sweep of your computer. Look for the best antivirus software on the market, run a complete scan, and make sure that your information is safe before you start entering and submitting it to the IRS.

Step 2: Secure Your PC and Browser Connection

Once you've made sure there aren't any hidden viruses or malware on your computer, you can start preparing to actually work on your taxes. Keep in mind that when filling out your tax returns, you are including information that isn't just private, but highly sensitive as well. A hacker with your Social Security Number, tax ID, or even simply your name and date of birth can wreak havoc on your life.

Therefore, before you start putting your information out there for the world to see, you should take time to create a secure computer environment and a robust and private connection to upload your results. You can begin by subscribing to an online identity theft protection suite which will scan the web and dark web for any trace of your personal information being used or sold as well as gain the tools needed to avoid fraud on your computer.

Similarly, protecting your connection is vital, as transmitting unencrypted information is an easy way for hackers to intercept and use your data. Find a strong virtual private network (you can read the best VPN reviews here) that will fully encrypt your communications and avoid anyone from snooping on your PC.

Step 3: Do Your Homework on Online Tax Tools

The explosion of e-filing has led to the emergence of hundreds of tax return services that help people e-file their forms. With such a large and crowded market, though, come the problems associated with them. Namely, it's tough to wade through hundreds of companies and find the one that works for you while delivering safety and peace of mind. This step is vital, though, as it can mean the difference in filing your taxes or potentially losing your identity.

Remember, deals that look too good to be true generally are, and companies that make outlandish promises put up the first red flag. Do your homework and take advantage of applications that have a proven and well-publicized record of trust and success. Companies like H&R Block, TaxAct, and TaxSlayer all have sterling reputations, and can help simplify the process thanks to professional assistance and the right digital tools.

Step 4: Get the Most Recent Software and Take Security Steps

Most people who e-file their tax returns do so through a variety of software applications available from companies like TurboTax and CompleteTax, which automate large portions of the process. For many, though, simply downloading the software once is an invitation for applications to constantly irritate users with notifications, pop-ups, and warnings that their software is out of date.

known vulnerabilities that have become public.

When you utilize software that is out of date, you increase your risk of being hacked because your software may not have the tools to stop an attack. Using a strong password(s) and keeping them secured in a strong location also helps your privacy. Some of the best password managers also improve security by helping to protect these sensitive credentials as a lost password is as dangerous as a stolen computer in the digital world.

Step 5: Be Smart When Filing Your Tax Returns

With protection installed and your computer cleaned, you're ready to dive into the complex tax code to finish your returns before time runs out. This step is straightforward though it involves two layers: filling you're your tax returns and being careful about how you're completing it. Strong protection like an anti-virus and a VPN are excellent steps to take towards protecting your identity, but they're not infallible and they are not cure-all solutions for enhanced cyber-security.

Make sure that when you work on your tax returns, you do so somewhere you trust, and you avoid taking unnecessary risks. This includes doing your taxes at home or places when you have a private wi-fi connection that is password-protected. Similarly, avoid doing things directly on the web when possible. Download forms and fill them out before submitting them to avoid your data being intercepted. Most importantly, stay vigilant and work to reduce your potential weak spots that are vulnerable to attacks.

Step 6: Wipe Away Your Tracks and Keep Your Data Offline

Unbeknownst to most people, every action they take online leaves a small trace, whether as a record or as a series of files left on a repository somewhere. No matter how robust your home firewall is, odds are your security is not fool-proof, and information can be stolen from places you assumed to be secure such as your email, social media accounts, and more. Countless examples, from Amazon to Equifax, highlight how unsecure and penetrable even the most robust systems can be.

Keeping your files on cloud storage is not generally advisable, as they contain all the information a hacker could need to steal your identity in a matter of minutes, nor is a simple folder on your PC. You can work to remove your information from your storage, or find applications that can encrypt your folders to further protect your data. Similarly, you can keep your tax information on external hard drives or flash

Fireplaces and Woodstoves tips from TSFD

Inspect and clean woodstove pipes and chimneys annually and check monthly for damage or obstructions.

Never burn trash, paper, or green wood.

Use a fireplace screen heavy enough to stop rolling logs and big enough to cover the entire opening of the fireplace to catch flying sparks.

Make sure the fire is completely out before leaving the house or going to bed.

Store cooled ashes in a tightly sealed metal container outside the home.



Things To Do

Movies at the Splash Park

Sat, January 26, 7pm – 9pm

Tarpon Springs Splash Park, 508 Live Oak St,

The Tarpon Springs Recreation Department will be hosting monthly Movies in the grassy field next to the Splash Park. Grab your lawn chairs and come enjoy the show. Popcorn and other concessions will be available. Movie begins at dusk. Call for movie listings 727-942-5628.

First Friday

Fri, February 1, 6pm – 10pm

East Tarpon Avenue

Tarpon Springs Merchant's Association florida@gmail.com or www.tarponspringsfloridausa.com

Sunset Beach Concert Series

Thu, February 7, 7pm – 9pm

Sunset Beach Concerts are on the first Thursday of the month (February - November) and start at 7pm. Concessions are available for purchase. Alcohol and pets are prohibited. Parking is limited onsite, so a courtesy shuttle will deliver concert goers to and from the beach and Tarpon Springs High School. In the event of inclement weather, the concert will be held the following Thursday. FREE!!



TARPON SPRINGS POLICE DEPT.

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TARPON SPRINGS, 34689

EMERGENCY # 911

NON EMERGENCY:

(727) 938-2849

CRIME PREVENTION :

(727) 937-8753

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