



# Tarpon Springs Police Department

*Building a Better Future Through Excellence in Policing*



March 2017

## Crime Watch Newsletter

### **DISTRACTED DRIVING**

#### Is distracted driving really a problem?

Distracted driving kills. The friends, family, and neighbors of the thousands of people killed each year in distracted driving crashes will tell you it is a very serious safety problem. The nearly half a million people injured each year will agree.

#### What is distracted driving?

Distraction occurs any time you take your eyes off the road, your hands off the wheel, and your mind off your primary task: driving safely. Any non-driving activity you engage in is a potential distraction and increases your risk of crashing.

#### If it's so dangerous, why do people do it?

Some people still don't know how dangerous distracted driving is. Others know about the risks of texting and talking while driving, but still choose to do so anyway. They make the mistake of thinking the statistics don't apply to them, that they can defy the odds. Still others simply lead busy, stressful lives and use cell phones and smartphones to stay connected with their families, friends, and workplaces. They forget or choose not to shut these devices off when they get behind the wheel.

#### Who are the most serious offenders?

Our youngest and most inexperienced drivers are most at risk, with 16% of all distracted driving crashes involving drivers under 20. But they are not alone. At any given moment during daylight hours, over 660,000 vehicles are being driven by someone using a hand-held cell phone. Continued on page 3.



From

T

S

P

D

2. Phony Check Scam

3. Distracted Driving / Fire safety / Consumer Alert

4. Things to do

## PHONY CHECK SCAM

2

Scammers know how to design phony checks to make them look legitimate. In fact, the Council of Better Business Bureaus just released a list of the most “risky” scams, based on how likely people are to be targeted, how likely to lose money, and how much money they lost. Fake checks were number two.

Fake checks drive many types of scams – like those involving phony prize wins, fake jobs, mystery shoppers, online classified ad sales, and others. In a fake check scam, someone asks you to deposit a check – sometimes for several thousand dollars – and, when the funds seem to be available, wire the money to a third party. The scammers always have a good story to explain the overpayment – they’re stuck out of the country, they need you to cover taxes or fees, you’ll need to buy supplies, or something else. But when the bank discovers you’ve deposited a bad check, the scammer already has the money, and you’re stuck paying the money back to the bank.

So don’t deposit a check and wire money or send money back in any way. Banks must make funds from deposited checks available within days, but uncovering a fake check can take them weeks. If a check you deposit bounces – even after it seemed to clear – you’re responsible for repaying the bank. Money orders and cashier’s checks can be counterfeited, too.



Sending or reading one text is pretty quick, unlike a phone conversation - wouldn't that be okay? Texting is the most alarming distraction because it involves manual, visual, and cognitive distraction simultaneously. Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for 5 seconds. At 55 mph, that's like driving the length of an entire football field, blindfolded. It's extraordinarily dangerous.

**Is it safe to use a hands-free device to talk on a cell phone while driving?**

So far, the research indicates that the cognitive distraction of having a hands-free phone conversation causes drivers to miss the important visual and audio cues that would ordinarily help you avoid a crash.



### **Consumer Alert**

**If someone instructed you to purchase a gift card to:**

**Post bail for a relative  
Settle of debt collection  
Avoid prosecution by the IRS  
You may be a target of a scam**

Call your local police or contact Pinellas County Protection (727) 464-6200 or <http://www.pinellascounty.org/consumer>

### **Fire Prevention Tips**

Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas. Test smoke alarms every month. ...

Talk with all family members about a fire escape plan and practice the plan twice a year.

If a fire occurs in your home, **GET OUT, STAY OUT and CALL FOR HELP.**



# THINGS TO DO IN TARPON SPRINGS

## HOOK KIDS ON FISHING

The Anglers for Conservation has teamed up with Tarpon Recreation Division to offer a hands-on, conservation-minded program to teach children ages 6-16 fishing concepts. Pre-Registration is required as spots are limited. Please call us to sign up. 727-942-5628. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Location: Craig Park/Spring Bayou

Day & Time: Saturday, March 25 from 10am- Noon

Fee: FREE

## TARPON SPRINGS EASTER EGG-STRAVAGANZA

Hop on over to the sports complex for a spectacular egg hunt. We will have children's activities, crafts, bounce houses and more!

Location: Sports Complex

Day & Time: Saturday, April 8th, from 10am-1pm

Fee: FREE

## TOUCH-A -TRUCK & OPEN HOUSE

Climb on up and check out all the city vehicles. Come see what Tarpon Springs has to offer.

Location: Tarpon Springs Library

Day & Time: Saturday, April 29 from 10am-2pm

Fee: FREE

## Peace4Tarpon Community Forum

March 31, 9:00 am – 10:30 am, Tarpon Springs Safety Building, 444 S. Huey Avenue, Tarpon Springs

## Tarpon Springs Shepherd Center 3rd Annual Health & Wellness Fair

Tuesday, April 11th, 4 – 6 pm E-Mail for info [robinsaenger@hotmail.com](mailto:robinsaenger@hotmail.com)



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CRIME PREVENTION :

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WE ARE ON THE WEB AT

[WWW.TSPD.US](http://WWW.TSPD.US)

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