



NOVEMBER 2018

# Tarpon Springs Police Department

*Building a Better Future Through Excellence in Policing*



## Crime Watch Newsletter

### *Holiday Celebrating*

The most traveled holiday period of the year is **Thanksgiving** weekend, and DUI arrests are at their highest between **Thanksgiving** and the end of New Year's weekend. **Thanksgiving** Eve is even referred to as “**Black Wednesday**,” as it may be the busiest night of the year for bars.

Holiday parties often involve alcohol, and while you want your guests to enjoy themselves, it's also important to make sure they are being responsible. This involves keeping an eye out for anyone who may be drinking too much, and either providing a place to stay or a means to get home with a designated driver. Here are a few steps you can take to prevent holiday drinking and driving.

- **Have a designated driver.** It's one of the simplest rules to follow, but also one of the most effective in keeping people safe on the roads.
- **Have cab/Uber numbers on hand.** If someone should not be driving and they insist on going home, call a cab for them instead of allowing them to take the risk of driving home.
- **Offer plenty of non-alcoholic drinks.** While many guests may want to enjoy the holidays with an alcoholic drink, offer non-alcoholic drinks as an option.
- **Offer food if you're offering alcohol.** Drinking on an empty stomach can cause a person to become intoxicated faster. Offering food along with drinks may help prevent guests from over-indulging on alcohol alone.

*The Tarpon Springs Police Department would like to wish you all a safe and happy holiday season.*



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## Protect Yourself from Charity Scams

Charity scammers exploit the generosity of those who wish to give to legitimate causes and pocket the money for themselves.

Here are a few tips for choosing a worthy charity and giving wisely.

Ask questions, such as: “Who is the fundraiser and who will benefit from the donation?”; “How much of the contribution goes to the charity mentioned in the request”; and “How much of the donation goes toward administrative and fundraising expenses?”

Check if the charitable organization is registered with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) by visiting [FloridaConsumerHelp.com](http://FloridaConsumerHelp.com).

Never give cash. Contribute by check and make it out to the organization.

If you decide to donate online, look for indicators that the website is secure, such as a web address that begins with “https:” (the “s” stands for secure).

Be aware that many telephone appeals for funds are made by paid solicitors, not volunteers. The solicitors often work for a for-profit firm hired by the charitable organization. Telemarketing is expensive and may entail substantial fundraising costs.

Some organizations have 900 phone numbers. When you call the number, the cost of the call is automatically billed to your phone. Before dialing, make sure you wish to donate the price of the call to that cause.

Always obtain and save a printed copy of your donation or a receipt showing the amount of the contribution.

Not all organizations soliciting in the name of benevolence are true charities eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions. If this is important to you, ask about the organization’s federal and state eligibility for receiving tax-deductible donations. Typically, such donations fall under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3).



### Portable Space Heaters

Keep combustible objects at least three feet away from portable heating devices.

Buy only heaters evaluated by a nationally recognized laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).

Check to make the portable heater has a thermostat control mechanism, and will switch off automatically if the heater falls over.

Check with your local fire department on the legality of kerosene heater use in your community.

Only use crystal clear K-1 kerosene in kerosene heaters. Never overfill it. Use the heater in a well-ventilated room.

## Online Shopping

Before you log on and make your first purchase, keep these ideas in mind to protect your credit card and keep your bank account information safe:

- **Only visit secure shopping websites—look for the “lock.”** Check the address bar for a padlock symbol indicating it’s a secure website. Also, addresses beginning with “https” (and not just “http”) indicate additional web security.
- **Shop online only with a secure network.** Although you might be enjoying a nice cup of hot cocoa at a coffee shop, avoid using the public Wi-Fi in order to keep your payment information safe.
- **Protect your personal information.** Never click the box to “remember” or save your password or credit card information. It only takes a few seconds to enter this information when you revisit a site. (This is not only a good idea for shopping, but should be a general rule for keeping your passwords safe.)
- **Watch out for imposters.** With online shopping, you typically receive a confirmation for the order and another when shipping occurs. One current phishing scam sends a fake email indicating a problem with your order and includes a link or attachment to click. Another phishing scam is targeting Amazon shoppers. Amazon will never send you an unsolicited email asking for sensitive personal information like your social security number, tax ID, bank account number, credit card information, ID questions like “mother's maiden name” or account password. If you receive a suspicious email, please report it immediately by sending it as an attachment to [stop-spoofing@amazon.com](mailto:stop-spoofing@amazon.com). (Likewise, if you are reporting a suspicious URL, put it in the body of the email and send it to [stop-spoofing@amazon.com](mailto:stop-spoofing@amazon.com).)
- **Monitor your purchases.** This is another list to “check twice.” Hopefully, you are reviewing your credit card and bank statements throughout the year. During the holidays, it is even more important to be vigilant so you can catch any suspicious activity on your accounts.
- **Ship to a secure location.** Package theft is becoming a growing trend. Avoid having your boxes stolen from your front porch by shipping to your work address or a neighbor who is home during the day. Take advantage of delivery lockers in your area and have your order shipped there instead.

**Brick and Mortar Shopping** For those of us who prefer feeling the “spirit of the holidays” by enjoying the sights, sounds and smells of the shopping experience, keep in mind that there may be people other than Santa and his helpers watching.

Some tips to keep in mind before heading out to the mall:

**Distractions.** The most common distraction is to be on the phone or texting as you are walking to the next store, or to your car. You may be checking on information for your next purchase, but someone else might be checking for people they can catch off-guard. It’s critical to be aware of your surroundings at these susceptible times. Wait until you are in a place where you can focus and not be a target.

**Parking.** Pay attention to detail when choosing a parking spot. It may be daylight when you park, but it may be dark when you return to your car. Try parking in a well-lit area. Make note of the location of your car, or tie a holiday bow to your car where you will be able to spot it easily. Prior to leaving the store or mall, gather all your packages and have your keys ready in your hand. Walk with purpose to your car and scan your surroundings for anyone (or anything) that seems suspicious. Many shops or malls have additional security on-site, even in the parking lots. Some also have escorts available who will accompany you to your car.

**Super-shopping.** If you plan on a shopping marathon, following the first three tips will have you ready for the race. However, if you need to make multiple trips to your car to drop off purchases, you’ll need to make sure they are secure until you return. Put packages in the trunk where they are out of sight. If packages need to be in the back or front seat, try to place them on the floor of the car and cover them with a blanket so they’re not visible to anyone walking past the car.

# HOLIDAY THINGS TO DO

## SNOW PLACE LIKE TARPON SPRINGS

The biggest Christmas event in north Pinellas returns to beautiful, historic downtown Tarpon Springs. This FREE event gets bigger and better every year! Snow Place features carriage rides, snow play area, visit with Santa, write and mail your letter to Santa, children's Christmas activities, DJ and Christmas music. Performances by local performers.

Location: Downtown Tarpon Springs

Day & Time: Friday, December 7th from 5-10pm

## TARPON SPRINGS BOAT PARADE

The 29th Annual Boat Parade will be held on Friday, December 7th, following Snow Place Like Tarpon Springs. Vessels will proceed down the Anclote River and into the bayous where Santa will give out treats to the children in Spring Bayou. There is no charge to participate, but all vessels must be registered to enter. Registration forms may be obtained at the City Marina and at the Recreation Division administrative office

Bayou between 8:00pm and 8:15pm.

Day & Time: Friday, December 7th at Approximately 8/8:15pm

## Elf in the Park After Dark

The Tarpon Springs Police Department is teaming up with Tarpon Springs Recreation and Publix for a holiday themed family movie night at the Splash Park field. Bring your lawn chairs and blankets for a night of fun! The fun will start at 5pm and the movie will begin at dusk.

Location: Splash Park Field, 508 Live Oak

Date & Time: Saturday, December 8th at 5pm

## SANTA'S CALLING

Here's your chance to have Santa Claus call your children at home. Applications will be available online (TSROnline.com) or at the recreation centers for Santa and his helpers to call between 6:00 pm and 8:30 pm on Tuesday, December 11th.

\*\*Volunteers are needed to help Santa call the children. Contact Ashley Harter at 727-942-5628

Day & Time: Tuesday, December 11th between 6:00pm and 8:30pm



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

“LIKE” US ON FACEBOOK

