

TARPON SPRINGS



POLICE DEPARTMENT

APRIL 2020

Better Future Through Excellence in Policing

CRIME WATCH NEWSLETTER

April 12-18 2020

National Public Safety Telecommunication Week

Tarpon Springs Police Department wants to say **Thank You** to the fine men and women in dispatch for the hard work and dedication to the community and the Police Department.



Dispatcher Greg Clark and Chief R. Kochen



Tarpon Springs Police

Members of the Tarpon Springs Police Department, members of the Tarpon Springs Fire Rescue, Sunstar, and city officials wanted to show their appreciation and thanks for the hard-working men and women at AdventHealth North Pinellas hospital today. We drove through the front parking lot, with lights and sirens, to show our respect and gratitude for the excellent job that these health care professionals are doing every day, so, we just wanted to say "We see you!!!" to our partners at the hospital and encourage them. We recognize the importance of their profession and wanted to show our support for what they do daily!.



Home and Neighborhood.

- ✓ Good locks, simple precautions, neighborhood awareness, and common sense can help prevent most property crimes.
- ✓ **Lock Doors, and Windows.** (about half of all burglars enter through unlocked doors and windows).
- ✓ Secure sliding glass doors with locks or a rigid wooden dowel wedged in the track.
- ✓ Lock double-hung windows by sliding a bolt or nail into a hole drilled at a downward angle through the top of each sash and into the frame.

Outside.

- ✓ Trim back shrubbery hiding doors or windows.
- ✓ Cut back tree limbs that could help a thief climb to second story windows.
- ✓ Make sure all porches, entrances, and yards are well lighted.
- ✓ Maintain the neighborhood. Dark alleys, litter, and rundown areas attract criminals.

Key Sense.

- ✓ Do not hide house keys in mail boxes, planters, or under doormats.
- ✓ Do not put personal identification on key rings.
- ✓ Leave only your ignition key with mechanics or parking attendants.
- ✓ If you lose the keys to your home or move into a new home, change the locks immediately.

Answering the Door.

- ✓ Install a peephole or viewer in all entry doors so you can see who is outside without opening the door.
- ✓ Do not trust door chains. They can be easily broken.
- ✓ Don't open the door to anyone you don't know.
- ✓ Insist service personnel verify their identity before allowing them in.

Pool Safety

This is a reminder of the importance of pool safety, especially in regard to children.

Tarpon Springs Police Department cares about your child's safety during these difficult times. We would like to take this opportunity to refresh parents on pool safety!



10 Steps to Prevent Child Drowning:

1. **Always stay within arm's reach** – The AAP advises that supervision of children in and around the water must be close, constant, and attentive.
2. **Ignore your phone** – “If you hear a text message come in and turn to your phone for five seconds, that's long enough for a child to be submerged”, says Anne Beasley, M.D., a pediatric hospitalist at Phoenix Children's Hospital.
3. **Don't rely on water wings. Period.** – “Parents put too much faith in flotation devices that were never made to be life preservers,” says James Callahan, M.D., a pediatric emergency physician at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. If your little one is a non-swimmer, it's okay to let her use “floatie” toys, but only if you're right there next to her in the water. And just say no to Mermaid fins; they can trap your child's legs, preventing her from easily kicking her way to the surface from beneath the water.
4. **Install the proper water barriers** – Door alarms, Locked doors, Pool fences.
5. **Sign your child up for swimming lessons** – After COVID 19 – Summer is right around the corner.
6. **Make older kids buddy up** – As an extra layer of protection, experts recommend that kids, who can swim, follow the buddy system. Pair your child with a friend or sibling and explain that each child is responsible for knowing where his/her buddy is at all times. But don't forget that a buddy doesn't replace adult supervision, rather, the system serves as an added precaution.
7. **Have the appropriate safety gear in case of an emergency** – Keep a telephone and equipment approved by the U.S. Coast Guard near pools, according to the AAP.
8. **Teach your child water rules:** 1. No running; 2. No diving in shallow end; 3. No pushing people in; 4. No pulling other kids under the water; 5. No swimming without adult supervision.
9. **Learn CPR** – If the worst happens and you have to rescue a distressed swimmer, conducting CPR while you wait for an ambulance to arrive could save that person's life. When the heart stops, continuing to circulate blood to the brain helps prevent a bad outcome, explains Dr. Beasley. “In a perfect world, all parents would be trained in CPR.”
10. **Be aware of the hazards at home:** Never leave a child alone in a bathtub or near a running bath. Never leave your baby unattended in a bath seat.

Credit: <https://www.parents.com/kids/safety/outdoor/the-sad-truth-about-drowning/>

Although these tips are important, it is just as important to remember, once you have concluded swimming for the day, ensure your barriers are ONCE AGAIN LOCKED. This is, unfortunately, a peak time for accidents to happen. Your little one loved the pool so much, they are ready for more, even if you are not. If you are grilling on the porch, please ensure that you do not leave your pool gate open or the doors to your house open while you walk to and from the grill. This presents an opportunity for a child to have access to the pool area.

COVID-19 SCAMS

Protect Your Wallet-and Your Health-from Pandemic Scammers

FBI Exec Discusses COVID-19-Related Schemes

This interview with Steven Merrill, head of the FBI's Financial Crimes Section, discusses scams and crimes related to the [COVID-19 pandemic](#). Merrill provides the latest information on the schemes the FBI is investigating and tips on how to protect yourself. This article is reprinted with permission.

Q: Why is this pandemic, or any disaster, such an opportunity for scammers and criminals?

A: Unfortunately, criminals are very opportunistic. They see a vulnerable population out there that they can prey upon. People are scared and looking for help. People are trying to protect themselves and their families.

For example, people are looking for medical attention and medical equipment. They also may be unemployed and looking for work. There may be an extra level of desperation right now that may cause someone to make an emotional decision that could make them a victim.

Q: What are some of the most common fraud schemes you're seeing?

A:

Government Impersonators

One of the most prevalent schemes we're seeing is government impersonators. Criminals are reaching out to people through social media, emails, or phone calls pretending to be from the government. In some cases, they're even going door-to-door to try to convince someone that they need to provide money for COVID testing, financial relief, or medical equipment.

We are a very trusting society, but it's important to know that the government will not reach out to you this way. If someone reaches out to you directly and says they're from the government helping you with virus-related issues, it's likely a scam. This "government" representative may be trying to use phishing or other techniques to hack your computer or get your personal information or money.

Fraudulent Cures or Medical Equipment

Right now, the threat we're most concerned about is fake cures or treatments for the virus. These "cures" can be extremely dangerous to your health—even fatal. You should never accept a medical treatment or virus test from anyone other than your doctor, pharmacist, or local health department.

Work-from-Home Fraud

People who are at home and out of work are vulnerable to work-from-home scams. If someone you don't know contacts you and wants you to urgently pay them in return for a "job," you are dealing with a criminal. Legitimate jobs will not ask you to pay them.

If you're in a role like this where you're being asked to send or move money, you're acting as a [money mule](#), which is a federal crime.

Continued COVID-19 SCAMS

Investment Fraud

One of the most lucrative schemes for criminals is offering you an opportunity to invest in a cure or treatment for the virus. The purpose of these get-rich-quick schemes is simply to [defraud the investor](#). Any offer like this should be treated with extreme caution.

Q: What potential scams should people be aware of regarding government financial benefits?

A: The government will not ask you for personal information to give you your financial benefits. If you receive an email, text message, or phone call claiming to help you get your benefits, do not respond.

If you are eligible to receive the benefits, your government check will be mailed to you or will be direct deposited into your bank account. (Note: The IRS has additional tips on [how to avoid these types of scams](#).)

www.irs.gov/newsroom/irs-issues-warning-about-coronavirus-related-scams-watch-out-for-schemes-tied-to-economic-impact-payments

Q: What is the FBI doing about these scammers?

: We're investigating many of these cases right now. We've already arrested and filed charges against those who we have evidence to believe are engaging in these crimes. We have teams of FBI employees working these cases every day.

strongly encourage anyone who comes across something suspicious to report it to the FBI at tips.fbi.gov or to the Internet Crime Complaint Center at ic3.gov.

Q: What can people do to protect themselves from scammers?

A: Use extreme caution in online communication. For emails, verify who the sender is-criminals will sometimes change just one letter in an email address to make it look like one you know. Be very wary of attachments or links; hover your mouse over a link before clicking to see where it's sending you.

In general, be suspicious of anyone offering you something that's "too good to be true" or is a secret investment opportunity or medical advice. Seek out legitimate sources of information.

For medical information, those trusted sources are your own doctor, cdc.gov, and your local health department. For financial information, that's ftc.gov or irs.gov.

Shared with permission from the FBI

IRS SCAMS



TREASURY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR TAX ADMINISTRATION OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS



Promoting Integrity in America's Tax System

Internal Revenue Service Impersonation Scam

How Does the Scam Work?

Criminals call intended victims and claim to be from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The scammers tell the intended victims that they owe taxes and must pay using a pre-paid debit card, money order, wire transfer, or gift card. The scammers threaten those who refuse to pay with being charged with a criminal violation, a grand jury indictment, immediate arrest, deportation, or loss of a business or driver's license. The scammers who commit this fraud often:



- Utilize a robocall machine to make unsolicited calls via Voice Over Internet Protocol technology to make it appear that the calls originate in the U.S.
- This technique, also known as "spoofing," can make the calls appear to be from the IRS or even a local police department.
- Use common names and fake IRS badge numbers.
- May know the last four digits of the victim's Social Security Number.
- Aggressively demand immediate payment to avoid being criminally charged or arrested.
- Claim that hanging up the telephone will cause the immediate issuance of an arrest warrant for unpaid taxes.
- Send bogus IRS e-mails to support their scam.
- Call a second or third time claiming to be the police or other government entity.

The IRS Will Never:

- Ask for payment via prepaid debit cards, money orders, or wire transfers.
- Ask for credit card numbers over the telephone.
- Request personal or financial information by e-mail, text, or via any social media.

What can I do?

- Do not engage with the callers, just hang up.
- Tell everyone that if you receive a call and think you owe taxes, hang up and call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040.
- Retain their original scam-related documentation: method of payment, receipts, notes, and telephone numbers used by the scammer. In the case of pre-paid cards, it is especially important to retain all card numbers.
- Immediately notify the company associated with the payment method, in an effort to stop or reverse funds.
- Be aware the IRS does employ non-law enforcement revenue officers and revenue agents who conduct field visits and will have official IRS credentials.
- Share this information with friends and family.

File a Report – Help us #SlamTheScam:

Online: <http://www.tigta.gov>
 Telephone: 1-800-366-4484
 Fax: 1-202-927-7018
 Mail: TIGTA Hotline
 P.O. Box 589
 Washington, D.C. 20044-0589



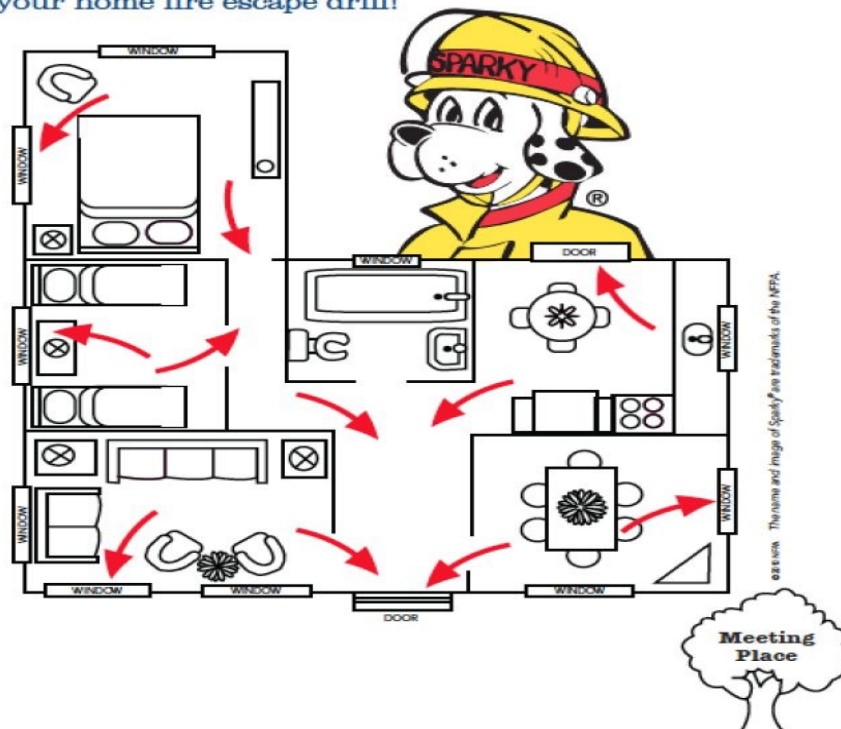
Fire Safety

Pre-Plan Your Escape



Safer at Home? Have you ever stopped to think about HOW you will get out in the event of a house fire? The time to plan for it is NOW. Nearly 1/2 of all Americans have not developed a home escape plan. Of those that have 1/4 have never practiced it. Don't wait until you don't have time to prepare. Remember that every second counts. Please take a little time and plan at least **TWO** ways out, teach your family and review it regularly.

- Practice your home fire escape drill!



PROPERTY CRIME YOU CAN HELP PREVENT IT



LOCK IT

Ensure your car doors and all doors to your residence are kept locked.



REMOVE IT

Removing valuables from your car is better than hiding them. This includes garage door openers and spare keys.



LIGHT IT

Leave exterior residence lights on at night or utilize motion detecting lights.



CLOSE IT

Keep your garage door closed and double-check it is closed at night.



HIDE IT

Keep valuables in your garage, car and home out of sight.



REPORT IT

Report all criminal and suspicious activity immediately.

Police-727-937-6151

**TARPON SPRINGS
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NON-EMERGENCY
(727) 938-2849
WWW.TSPD.US



WE ARE ON THE WEB AT
WWW.TSPD.US



“LIKE” US ON FACEBOOK



*COVID-19: information is posted on our
web page and Facebook page*

Tarpon Springs Police Department

444 South Huey Avenue

Emergency #911

Administration # 727-938-2849

Dispatch # 727-937-6151

