NIFC COMMUNITY AWARENESS UPDATE

NIFC COMMUNITY AWARENESS UPDATE 3/24 (15 Apr 24)

(The Community Awareness Update provides general information to enable personnel to keep up-to-date with routine correspondence; it is not provided for mission-related items and does not replace the Emergency Messaging System.)

WELCOME TO ALL OUR NEW 'FAMILY' MEMBERS; THE COMMUNITY AWARENESS UPDATE IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE YOU WITH, HOPEFULLY, INFORMATIVE AND USEFUL INFORMATION.

CONTENT:

- **POTHOLES – WHO PAYS?**
- **'STRANDED VEHICLE' SCAM**
- **REPORT A CRIME.**

POTHOLES – WHO PAYS?

Making a claim for pothole damage:

- Potholes are a menace on our roads; here's what to do if you hit one.
- Whether you're driving down a country lane or heading through the city streets, you should be on the alert for potholes because even a fairly small divot can cause damage to your car.
- You don't need to be travelling at speed either for a bump to impact your suspension or steering.
- What causes potholes?
- Wear and tear from traffic creates small fissures in the road's surface. Excess water in wet weather and ice and snow in winter can make these cracks bigger. The colder months from December to March see the largest number of claims for pothole damage.

Things to look out for if you hit a pothole:

- You might not be able to see any obvious issues but its best to get things checked out if you feel any wobbling or vibration after hitting a pothole.
- If your car is pulling to the left or right it could be a problem with the wheel alignment. If you're at all worried, get your local garage to take a look. That way if you need to claim for pothole damage, you've got a report to back you up.

Can I claim for pothole damage to my car?:

- Yes, thankfully you can. Record all the details of the incident – take note of the time, location, the road name and the driving conditions.
- Measure the dimensions of the hole and take pictures of it, if you can do so safely. Any hole more than 40mm deep can be classed as a pothole.
- Take pictures of any damage to your car including the wheel trim, tyres and exhaust. Get a written report from a reputable garage.
- You can also claim if the pothole causes you to have an accident and hit another vehicle.

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Claiming for pothole damage through insurance:

- One of the benefits of taking out Comprehensive car insurance is that you are covered for damage caused by potholes but bear in mind that it may not be worth claiming if the level of excess you have arranged to pay is more than the cost of repair.
- Be aware that claims for damage from potholes may affect your No Claims Bonus if you haven't protected it.
- If you need to make a claim for pothole damage, get your vehicle into an approved garage as soon as possible. Check if your insurance policy allows for a replacement car to keep you mobile while your car is in for repair.

Can you claim compensation for pothole damage?:

- If you are claiming for pothole damage through the council, you'll need to have a pretty solid case.
- Do your homework to find which authority is responsible for the stretch of road where the incident happened and contact them as soon as possible to report it.
- A claim for pothole damage on minor roads would be through your local council office, you can check the government website for details.
- Contact the Highways Agency if the pothole is on a motorway or A road. When you make a pothole claim, send them your report and pictures along with the findings from your mechanic.

Can you sue the council for pothole injury?:

- You may be able to claim compensation if you can prove the accident that resulted in a physical injury was directly caused by a pothole.
- If you receive an offer from the council you can either accept it or appeal. If your claim is rejected or you want to appeal you may need to seek legal advice.
- To check if a pothole has been reported, ask for a road inspection report, which should be able to tell you if the problem has been logged before.

How to avoid damage from potholes:

- Keep within the speed limit.
- Avoid flooded roads and steer clear of puddles that could mask what lies underneath.
- Keep your tyre pressure at the correct level and make sure the tread is not worn down.
- Potholes can be very hard to spot until you feel the jolt, so take extra care in wintry conditions and in poor visibility.

'STRANDED VEHICLE' SCAM

We have recently seen a return of the probable 'stranded vehicle' scam on a couple of occasions. It was more 'high-profile' four or five years ago but could be making a return.

How does the 'petrol and rings' roadside scam work?

- "Stranded" drivers, usually smartly dressed and parked on the hard shoulder, flag down passing motorists and ask for help. Their story varies, but the essence is that they have run out of petrol and have no money to buy any more.

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- There's often a 'tragedy' attached - some claim that one of their relatives has died and they need to get back home urgently.

- Many offer to show some form of identification, often a bogus business card, with a promise to repay the money and they offer jewellery such as "gold" rings as security. However, the rings are fake and valueless and the tricksters then flee with the cash, never to be seen again.

If you witness similar activity, try to obtain the basic details but do not stop and place yourself at risk. If you can, obtain some or all of the following:

S – Shape of vehicle (saloon, hatchback, etc.).
C – Colour of vehicle.
R – Registration/Index number.
I – Identifying marks (stickers, damage, etc.).
M – Make/Model.

Details of occupants (male/female, dress, etc.), location, date, time. (**A**ge, **B**uild, **C**olour, etc.)

If you have dash-cam footage, please pass it on.

The key action is to:
- If you feel it is an emergency situation, call 999.
- If you feel it is of sufficient concern, inform the Cambridgeshire Constabulary, using the non-emergency line by dialling **101** and pass on details of the location, vehicle, and occupants.
- Locally, you can pass the details to the NIFC Watch and follow up with a call under the Eagle Eyes program by notifying RAF Molesworth Law Enforcement Desk, using **01480 842400**.

Scammers will stop at nothing to convince us to part with our cash; if you think it is suspicious or too good to be true – it probably is!

If you do not want to speak directly to the police you can contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111. You can also **contact Action Fraud**, the UK's national fraud and internet crime reporting centre on 0300 123 2040.

REPORT A CRIME

Is it an emergency?

- Does it feel like the situation could get heated or violent very soon? Is someone in immediate danger? Do you need support right away? If so, please call 999 now.

- If you have a hearing or speech impairment, use the textphone service **18000** or text on **999** if you've pre-registered with the emergencySMS service.

- If you've witnessed or been the victim of crime please report it to the police.

Is it an emergency? Call 999

If it is <u>not</u> life threatening: Call 101 for the Civil Police; Call 111 for the NHS.

If you want to report a concern anonymously, you can report it via the Crimestoppers website or via their hotline on: 0800 555 111.

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- Reports are dealt with by a control room in exactly the same way whether you report it online or by telephone.

- Before you give details of the crime, you will be asked a few questions to make sure you go to the relevant online form.

Wherever you are, whatever the situation….

If you see something, say something.
Stay Alert, Stay Alive!

Is it an emergency? Call 999

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