



NIFC COMMUNITY AWARENESS UPDATE



NIFC COMMUNITY AWARENESS UPDATE 13/24 (11 Dec 24)

(The Community Awareness Update provides general information to enable personnel to keep up-to-date with routine crime prevention and security awareness 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.

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- **INCREASE IN SCAMS OVER THE 'HOLIDAY SEASON'; CHRISTMAS FRAUDSTERS ARE TARGETING YOU – SOME TIPS TO STAY SAFE THIS FESTIVE PERIOD.**
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INCREASE IN SCAMS OVER THE 'HOLIDAY SEASON'; CHRISTMAS FRAUDSTERS ARE TARGETING YOU – SOME TIPS TO STAY SAFE THIS FESTIVE PERIOD:



BLUF. As we enter the 'holiday season', don't let the 'Ho, Ho, Ho.' become 'Woe, Woe, Woe.' as the scammers seek to make it anything but a Merry Xmas. Forty-two percent (42%) of adults in the UK have been targeted by a scam in the last twelve (12) months; with £570 million reported stolen by scammers in the first half of 2024. The ten fastest growing scams this year are:

- **Fake Parcel Delivery Texts – (40%):** Fake parcel delivery texts involve scammers sending fake delivery notifications for parcels, prompting the recipient to click on a link to reschedule delivery or pay a fee. The link often leads to a phishing site designed to steal personal information or install malware on the victim's device.
- **Social Media Marketplace Scams – (30%):** Criminals use platforms like Facebook Marketplace, Instagram, or TikTok to advertise and sell products that do not exist. Fake profiles are created to advertise popular and in-demand goods (often using stolen photos from real sellers) and list attractive offers to lure victims into making purchases. Once payment is made, the promised goods never arrive, and the fake account disappears.

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- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Voice Cloning Scams – (30%):** Using AI voice cloning technology to deceive victims by creating realistic audio impersonations of trusted individuals or authorities, for example to ask for authorisation of fraudulent transactions or solicit sensitive information.
- **Money Request from Friend or Family Scams – (29%):** Scammers posing as someone you know to urgently request money, often through phone, email, or social media, to exploit your trust.
- **Event Ticket Scams – (28%):** Scammers selling counterfeit or non-existent tickets to popular events, such as gigs, concerts, or sports games – victims purchase tickets online or through social media, only to discover that the tickets are invalid or never arrive.
- **Cost-of-Living Assistance Scams – (25%):** Scammers exploiting individuals' financial vulnerabilities by offering fake assistance programs, grants, or loans to help with living expenses, only to steal the money or use the information for identity theft.
- **Tax Rebates Scams – (24%):** Fraudulent emails, phone calls or text messages offering fake tax rebates, either claiming people are due a refund or asking them to request one – which are aimed at stealing personal information or money.
- **Refund Scams – (23%):** Scammers claim you are owed a refund to steal personal or financial information. They may contact you by phone, email, or text, posing as a legitimate entity to trick you into revealing sensitive details or sending money.
- **Deep-fake Celebrity Endorsement Scams – (22%):** Creating deepfake videos using AI of celebrities or trusted brands such as news outlets to promote fraudulent schemes, such as investment opportunities.
- **Get Rich Quick Investment Scams – (22%):** "Get Rich Quick" investment scams are fraudulent schemes that promise high returns with little risk or effort in a short period. Scammers often use persuasive tactics and fabricated success stories to lure individuals into investing their money.

Bottom Line. If it looks too good to be true, it probably is!

What can you do to ensure online security this year?

- Look out for the padlock symbol and 'https' in the address bar on retailers' websites. (*...but you already know that from the regular Security Awareness tips throughout the year J*)
- Watch out for deals that look too good to be true.
- Never use public wi-fi to purchase Christmas shopping online.
- Never give out your PIN or online banking password – legitimate websites won't ask for it.
- Keep an eye on your bank balance so that you can spot and report fraudulent transactions quickly.
- Be on high alert for fraud this year to guarantee a perfect Christmas, just double-check before buying and if you think something looks wrong, trust your gut feeling.

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What else can you do to stay safe?

- **Beware of fake online shops:** Look for online reviews and a contact number; if it has neither, then it should be a warning sign.
- **Charity phishing:** Scammers know that you will feel charitable at this time of the year. If you want to give to good causes at Christmas, go through the charity in question's own site.
- **Fake delivery emails:** With so many deliveries being made it would be easy to get confused by all the delivery emails. Scammers know this and send out emails that purport to come from legitimate courier companies. These ask recipients to click on a link; when they do, they download malware or are taken to a scam site.
- **E-voucher scams:** These are often shared on social media or email and claim to offer free vouchers from well-known brands. Potential victims are told that, to claim a voucher, all they need to do is click on a link. This can take them to a fake site where they will be asked for their details.

In summary, be on high alert for fraud this year to guarantee a perfect Christmas and just double-check before buying - if you think something looks wrong, it probably is.

OP LIMIT - XMAS DRINK & DRUG DRIVE CAMPAIGN:



Last year, over 56,000 tests were recorded as part of Operation Limit, tackling drink and drug driving over the 'holiday season'.

- 14% of tests showed positive result for drink or drugs.
- 6,616 arrests made.
- 1,589 individuals charged for drink and drug driving.

Police forces, in your home area and any area you may be travelling through or to, will be taking part in a proactive operation to increase breath testing and targeted vehicle stops for drivers suspected of being under the influence.

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DRIVING TIPS FOR THE WINTER MONTHS:

Driving through snow:

- While many may be dreaming of a white Christmas, snow is a big hazard for drivers; as well as causing delays and unsafe conditions it can also dent your wallet.
- Only clearing ice or snow from part of your windscreen, known as 'Portholing', can lead to up to three points on your licence and a £60 fine. By law, every glass panel must be visible out of and you must have a clear view of the road from all angles before you set off.
- While it is not illegal to drive with snow on your roof, it could put others or yourself at risk. If loose snow were to fall it could obstruct your vision, or fall onto the car behind and impact their ability to see. You could then be charged with 'driving without due consideration' or 'using a motor vehicle in a dangerous condition' - which again can land you in a lot of trouble.

It is always advised to fully wipe snow and ice from your roof and every window.

Leaving your car running while defrosting the windscreen: Despite defrosting your car to make your driving conditions safer, you can actually be committing a crime if done incorrectly on a public road. According to the Road Traffic Act 1998, it is an illegal offence to leave your engine on whilst you clear away snow and ice from outside your vehicle on a public road - it can also land you an initial £20 fine. Always make sure to turn your vehicle off before exiting.

Snow or ice blocking your number plate: It isn't just your roof or window screen that can land you a hefty fine if it is covered in snow. If you do not clear any ice or snow obscuring your front and rear number plate you could receive a fine of up to £1,000 from Local Authorities. The Law states that all number plates must be clearly visible, as if it is obstructed it can affect your car being picked up by speed cameras or police checks.

So it is important to make sure there is no snow, ice or grit covering them before you set off this Christmas.

Singing and dancing to loud music whilst driving: We all like to sing along to Christmas songs during the festive period, but you should be careful as doing so can land you fines up to £5,000! According to the Highway Code, if you were to play your music too loud it could be classed as a distraction, and leave you with up to three points on your license and a £100 fine this Christmas.

In more severe cases, if your music was loud enough to obstruct you from hearing potential hazards, this could put others at risk and you could be liable for 'driving without due care and attention' or 'dangerous driving' charges.

These are serious charges that can lead to driving bans and up to £5,000 in fines from your Local Authority.

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Putting decorations on your car: While it may look nice, decorating your car this Christmas can also lead to fines, invalidate your insurance and result in driving bans. Despite not being illegal, it is recommended that lights, reindeer antlers, ribbons and tinsel should all be avoided inside and outside of your vehicle this Christmas. One of the main risks is if any decorations obstruct your view. They should definitely not be put on dashboards or windows. If your view out of the windscreen is obscured, it can lead to three points and up to £1,000 in fines.

Adding fairy lights to your car can also be very dangerous. Additional lights can confuse road users and cause collisions. According to the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989, coloured lights that are not native to your vehicle should not be used and doing so can get you in trouble.

If any decorations were also to detach from your car they could pose a risk to others. If this was to happen and cause an accident you could face a charge of 'careless driving' or 'driving without reasonable consideration for other road users' - which can lead to a court case and an unlimited fine and a driving ban depending on the situation.

Incorrectly attaching a Christmas tree to your roof: While there are no specific rules in the Highway Code regarding transporting Christmas trees via your car, there are related rules regarding overloading your vehicles. These can lead to a £100 fine, up to three points and even damage to your vehicle. If your tree's distribution, weight, position or the way it is secured on the car is unsuitable then it can also lead to your vehicle to be classed as being in a dangerous condition under the Road Traffic Act 1988.

Here are three tips to help you safely load your tree this Christmas:

- Be sensible when picking your tree. As well as making sure it fits the place you're displaying it, make sure your car will be suitable to transport it. Also always be careful and more cautious when you are driving with a tree on, or in, your vehicle.
- If your tree does fit inside your car, make sure it is securely strapped down so it will not move around and hit passengers. If it is hanging out of your boot then make sure you attract a reflective warning to alert other road users.

If your tree is too long to fit safely in your car, you can attach it to your roof. Make sure it is enclosed in netting as it will make it easier to control. A roof rack is advised but if you do not have one, open the car doors and tie the tree through that way. Use bungee cords or strong rope to attach the tree tightly - wrapping it multiple times. Also make sure the stump is at the front of your car to make it more aerodynamic.

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In the next couple of months you will see some of the following scenarios:

Brrrrrrrrrr, it's
cold outside:



Please take that little bit of extra time and clear your windscreen and side/rear windows before driving off..... but not by leaving your vehicle to warm up unattended whilst you go back into the warmth and finish off you morning cuppa.

ROAD SAFETY - B660 'T' JUNCTION:

- The 'old timers' will tell you that the 'T' junction at the top of the hill as you turn left towards RAF Molesworth has seen its fair share of vehicles in the woods opposite the junction, including a fatality the other year. Whilst it is only marked as a 'Give Way' junction, take extra care when approaching, giving due consideration to both the road surface condition and traffic on the main road travelling westbound and eastbound.
- Additionally, there are a number of 's' bends and sharp left/right corners on the 'back' roads between Alconbury, Peterborough, Kimbolton, etc, regularly visited by overturned vehicles – drive to road conditions, reduce your speed, arrive alive.

...AND, FINALLY: THE THREAT FROM TERRORISM IS A REAL ONE:

- **The Counter Terrorism Policing message remains in that you should trust your instincts and report anything that doesn't feel right when you are out and about in the coming weeks.**
- Sadly, the threat from terrorism is a real one. Every year across the UK, Counter Terrorism Policing receives over 10,000 reports from the public and a fifth of those provide intelligence which is particularly useful to investigators. Since 2017, CTP, along with partners, have disrupted over 40 terrorist plots.
- The festive period will see a large amount of events, including Christmas markets, football matches and carol services attracting large crowds of people. As more people head out and about to enjoy the festive period, it is important to stay safe – so, if it doesn't look or feel right – report it.
- If you see something suspicious, either tell a police officer, report it online via www.gov.uk/ACT or call the confidential Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321. **In an emergency, call 999.**

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CRIME PREVENTION:

Beware of pickpockets:

The one thing you will not be at a Christmas Market is... alone; and this is the perfect scenario for pickpockets to operate. Crowds going in various directions – pushing, shoving, distracted by stallholders and vendors...

Keep your wallet and valuables close to you at all times. Pickpockets may try to distract you or physically bump into you, especially in crowded places. If you realise you have been pickpocketed, shout out to warn others.

You can review a wide range of Crime Prevention tips via:

<https://www.cambs.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/>

STAY ALERT, STAY ALIVE:

Policing and security authorities encourage the public to trust their instincts and report anything that doesn't feel right to security or the police.

- You can help by sharing campaign messages for any events you are organising or supporting.
- You can increase your awareness by taking the free online ACT Awareness e-learning training.

Promoting the awareness and vigilance is also a powerful way of using communications as an extra layer of protective security. By supporting the campaign and using security-minded communications, you could help to deter hostile activity at major events.

We all have a role to play in keeping each other safe.

Wherever you are, whatever the situation....



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

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