

# Crime Prevention Tips From: SHERIFF SADIE DARNELL



## Crime Prevention Tips

### Prescription drugs are the second most commonly abused drug in the US.

A recent White House study found a 400 percent jump in prescription drug abuse between 1998 and 2008. Experts blame a lack of monitoring programs as well as Americans' increasing unwillingness to bear even small pains. The National Institutes of Health estimates that nearly 20 percent of people in the United States have used prescription drugs for non-medical reasons.

Many Prescription drugs can become addictive. This is far more common when they are used in a way inconsistent with their labeling or the reason they were prescribed. Commonly abused prescription drugs include narcotic painkillers like OxyContin or Vicodin, sedatives and tranquilizers such as Xanax or Valium, and stimulants like Adderall or Ritalin. Drugs that alter or duplicate hormones such as steroids are also on the rise.

In 2008, 1.9 million youth (or 7.7 percent) age 12 to 17 abused prescription drugs, with 1.6 million (or 6.5 percent) abusing a prescription pain medication. That makes painkillers among the most commonly abused drugs by teens after tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana. In fact, each day an average of 2,000 teenagers age 12 to 17 use a prescription drug without a doctor's guidance for the first time. Only 4.7 percent of children are obtaining these prescription drugs from a stranger, drug dealer or from the internet.

There is a perception, especially among younger people, that prescription drugs are safer than illegal street drugs. Most people don't lock up their prescription medications, nor do they discard them when they are no longer needed for their intended use, making them vulnerable to theft or misuse. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently found there were about 1.2 million visits to US emergency rooms involving pharmaceutical drugs in 2009, compared with 627,000 in 2004. In a growing number of states, deaths from prescription drugs now exceed those from motor vehicle accidents.

Help prevent prescription drug abuse by disposing of prescription medications if they are expired or are no longer needed. **The Alachua County Sheriff's Office is supporting Project Drug Drop**, a free environmentally friendly drug take back program.

**On August 27th, 2011 from 10am to 2pm ACSO Deputies will be staffing drug take back stations at four Alachua County Walgreen Locations:**

All prescription and over the counter medications will be accepted except pressurized inhaler type containers. No questions will be asked in reference to why you have the prescriptions even if they are not yours.

Thank You in advance for your support of this worthwhile program.

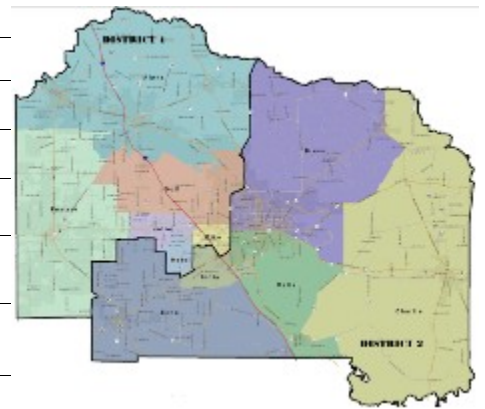
- 14040 West Newberry Road, Newberry, FL
- 2415 S.W. 75<sup>th</sup> Street, Gainesville, FL
- 1120 East University Avenue, Gainesville, FL
- 5171 N.W. 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, Gainesville, FL



*Sadie Darnell*

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# Aggressive Panhandling & Solicitation



**Alachua County Ordinances 118.01-118.05 deals with beggars, panhandlers, solicitors, peddlers, and canvassers.** The Alachua county Ordinance prohibits panhandling along or on roadways & bike paths where the activity could distract drivers. It also prohibits these activities on private property where a “No Soliciting” sign is posted in plain view. Soliciting will be terminated in residential areas each day by 7pm or sundown, whichever is earlier, and will not resume before 9am. The ordinance also makes it illegal for vehicle operators to offer money or other articles of value to panhandlers. Violation of this ordinance is a Misdemeanor and the penalty could be up to a \$500.00 fine or no more than 60 days in jail.

**City of Gainesville Ordinances 19.79—19.90 deal with begging, panhandling and soliciting.** The city ordinance has stricter prohibitions on panhandling which include no panhandling at the following places a.) At an outdoor cafe; b.) Within 12 feet of an outdoor cafe; c.) In a public restroom; d.) At a public event that is operating by permit issued by the city at city parks as defined in section 18-18 of this Code; e.) At any other public event that is operating by permit issued by the city with defined boundaries; f.) From any person standing in line to enter a building or event; g.) Within 12 feet of a line to enter a building or event; h.) From any person entering or exiting a building; i.) Within 12 feet of the entrance or exit of a building; j.) From any person using an automated teller machine, or any electronic information processing device which accepts or dispenses cash in connection with a credit, deposit or convenience account (ATM); k.) Within 12 feet of an ATM; l.) From any person using a pay phone; m. Within 12 feet of a pay phone. It also prohibits panhandling in private buildings and on private property without the owners permission.

Both the City and County ordinances can be found on the Municode web site. Just click on the picture link, then the County or City, and then type in the ordinance number.



**Panhandling is a growing social and public safety concern across the country.** Dealing with panhandlers can be challenging. Panhandlers are just like everyone else in that they come in all shapes, sizes, temperaments and backgrounds. Panhandling is usually associated with begging or asking for something and not giving anything in return. Soliciting is more commonly associated with attempting to sell something or advertise something by going onto private property however both terms are used in conjunction for the Alachua County and Gainesville Ordinances.

Most panhandlers passively ask for money or hold a sign while standing on private property or in a safe place on public property. If you tell them no, they move on and do not continue to ask. Other panhandlers are much more aggressive! They will make demands for money or other items even after being told no. Sometimes they might follow you and make a scene by raising their voice or using profane language. Some panhandlers choose to solicit in places that are particularly intimidating such as near ATM machines, the entrance or exit to buildings, at pay phones, in a restroom or near your car on the road. This is aggressive panhandling and in Gainesville it is against the law! You can take action, both to stop the crime and to make a real difference to help people in need.

## **If you are confronted by an aggressive panhandler you should:**

- 1) Tell them “NO” politely and continue to walk. “Never make an excuse for why you can not give them money as this will give them a way to keep talking”
- 2) If they start following you or they display other aggressive behavior yell for help and call 9-1-1. “Give an accurate description to the call taker and make a report with the Sheriff’s Office or Police Department.
- 3) Make contact with or call in a report to the business owners if it occurs in front of a business so that they can obtain a trespass warning against the individual. This will keep yourself and others from having to deal with the situation in the future.
- 4) Never give money to aggressive panhandlers as this will encourage the behavior. Politely say “NO.” Remember that not all panhandlers are homeless-many may make up stories to get money to use for drugs or alcohol; when you take out your wallet or purse, you’re more likely to be a victim of a crime.
- 5) If you wish to help, give money where it will make a difference. Give money to a charity that makes help available to people in need.

## **How to deal with Solicitors:**

- 1) Purchase “No Soliciting” signs and post them at all of the entrances of your subdivision with the permission of your association, or post in front of your property if you do not live in a subdivision. Signs can be purchased at any hardware and most department stores.
- 2) Do not open the door for solicitors and immediately call Law Enforcement to deal with the situation. Remember that many solicitation attempts are actually attempted frauds and the solicitors could also be casing your house for a burglary.



~~Deputy Leo Lowe

# Alachua County Sheriff's Office SWAT TEAM



The Alachua County Sheriff's Office Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team is a specially trained Law Enforcement team that is used during hostage situations, certain drug busts, cases in which a suspect is barricaded, and other highly tactical situations that require elite skills and weaponry. The SWAT team's goal is to resolve high risk situations with the least amount of personal injury and property damage as possible, only using force which is necessary to resolve the particular situation and its unique circumstances.

The origins of the SWAT team can be found in 1960s Los Angeles, when the police department recognized a growing need for an elite, highly-trained response team which could handle emerging situations. The first SWAT team was established there in 1967, and the concept quickly spread across the nation to other Police Departments and Sheriff's Offices. Today, most major American Law Enforcement Agencies have a SWAT team. Agencies who do not have a SWAT team typically have a cooperative agreement with a Law Enforcement agency that does.

In order to qualify for the ACSO SWAT team, a Deputy must generally have several years of experience on active duty and as a general rule he or she should have been recognized for exemplary service. SWAT Team members must maintain a physical fitness level and must have 90% or better firearms proficiency. When an Deputy is accepted to the SWAT team, he or she receives over 80 hours of specialized SWAT training, along with an assortment of tools which are available only to SWAT personnel, including specialized body armor, specialized weapons, and access to ballistic gear and specially outfitted vehicles.



The ACSO SWAT team is a part time unit and all of the team members work Deputy positions in patrol or other divisions. All SWAT team members are required to be on call for call out 24 hours a day 7 day a week. When the SWAT team is activated, the SWAT Deputies will be sent out to the location of the call. Some of the SWAT members will respond to the station to pick up necessary equipment including the Armored Personnel Carrier, which is a heavily armored vehicle provided to the Sheriff's Office through a Home Land Security grant.



Whenever a suspect is believed to be heavily armed or suicidal, a SWAT team is sent out. SWAT teams also assist with the service of arrest warrants for dangerous subjects, intervene in hostage situations, help to break down barricades, work on counter-terrorism missions, provide perimeter security for high-profile events, and provide assistance in other high-risk situations.

SWAT Deputies working in the Patrol Division are an asset to the Sergeants and Lieutenants on the road as their specialized training can greatly assist supervisors with making critical decisions such as perimeter placement, sniper placement, and entry tactics. These decisions are critical for protecting the lives of victims, Law Enforcement, and suspects.

~~ Deputy Leo Lowe

# Alachua County Sheriff's Office K-9 Unit



K-9 Teams are a valuable Law Enforcement tool utilized in the apprehension of criminals, evidence searches, drug detection, explosives detection, crowd control, psychological deterrence, and fostering public relations.

Dogs have 220 million olfactory receptors in their nose while humans only have 5 million. The percentage of the dog's brain that is devoted to analyzing smells is actually 40 times larger than that of a human! This makes dogs able to smell 100 times better than a human. Imagine entering a pizza shop. You would just smell pizza.

The K-9 would smell the bread and each individual topping as a separate and distinct smell. This is why dogs are essential to Law Enforcement. With training a dog can be taught to find anything that has a smell, such as drugs, bombs, and people.



Law Enforcement dogs live with their partners. A K-9 unit is a team and a K-9 Deputy makes their K-9 a part of their family. A K-9 knows when it is time to work because they and their partners dress for the job. K-9s look forward to their day of work just as your dog would look forward to riding in the car and going to the park. K-9 training teaches the dogs through primarily positive reinforcement of instinctual behaviors. Rewards are given for desired behaviors and withheld for undesired behaviors.

Like most police work, each K-9 shift involves lots of driving around, followed by brief periods of action when a call comes in on the radio. When a call comes in, the K-9 unit rolls out in a special vehicle outfitted with a space in the back for the dog. ACSO K-9s get to ride around in an SUV, with a separate compartment for them in the back that has water and a bed.

There is never a typical day in an Alachua County K-9's life. One morning they might be asked to wake up early to conduct drug sweeps at schools. These searches send a strong message that drugs won't be tolerated at schools, and anyone who brings them will get caught. The next night they might be asked to track a burglary or robbery suspect who fled through the woods. The K-9s are trained to search for the scent trail of a person on the ground. They are also taught to detect the scent of a person in the air, the scent "cone" that flows downwind from a person when he or she is nearby. Air scenting is important,



because a K-9 can sense if a suspect has circled back around to ambush the Deputy.

Multiple times a day, the K-9 might be called out to assist road Deputies with traffic stops where there is suspicion that drugs might be in the vehicle. Drug interdiction depends on the K-9s skills as drug traffickers will hide drugs inside the frame, engine, and even the tires of their vehicles.

Some of the K-9s have been trained to smell the components used in the construction of bombs. These dogs assist Deputies in making sure buildings are safe for large events and they also help us clear a building if a

bomb threat has been made. You can feel safer every time you attend a UF football game thanks to the hard work of an ACSO K-9 Unit. As a result of their duties, K-9 Deputies often have to attend court to give testimony for cases involving suspects they have caught.

After their work shift has ended, it's back home for a good night's sleep. As you can see, that's a busy schedule, and that doesn't even include training days. Every week the K-9 Unit will spend a ten hour shift training in order to keep the dog's skills sharp.

~~Deputy Leo Lowe



## SENIORS VS. CRIME : IT'S ALL ABOUT HELPING OTHERS



Bill McCollum Attorney General

### Seniors vs Crime

A Special Project of the Florida Attorney General

Did you know that the Florida Attorney General provides a program called Seniors vs. Crime to help citizens who have been cheated out of money or have had someone take financial advantage of

them? The primary goal of this program is to reduce victimization of senior citizens who are often targeted for specific crimes based on their age however there is NO age requirement to use Seniors vs. Crime.

Every Wednesday and Thursday you will find the Seniors vs. Crime volunteers hard at work in an office they share with Teleserve at the Alachua County Sheriff's Office. All of the Seniors vs. Crime volunteers are at least 50 years of age, hence the title, "Seniors" vs. Crime. Having volunteers from all walks of life is a real advantage according to Regional Director, Barbara Thomas. Our volunteers bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the job. They are very successful when negotiating with individuals who have taken advantage of someone and have not delivered something as promised. The cases we work are those that Law Enforcement professionals would deem "a civil matter" and their recommendation would normally be small claims court or the hiring of an attorney. Our volunteers, affectionately known as "Senior Sleuths" have recovered more than 9 million dollars for Florida citizens since the first office opened in 2001. All of the money recovered is returned directly to the client, there is no charge for our services.

There are no problems too large, or too small. Each case is handled on an individual basis, and confidentiality is maintained in accordance with Florida Public Records Law.

For example, some cases are quite simple, a few phone calls and the problem is resolved. In a recent case the client had been over charged thirty-eight dollars by her dentist. A phone call from Seniors vs. Crime resulted in the thirty-eight dollars being returned to the client.

Other cases require lengthy investigations and contact with many other individuals and/or agencies. Another case worked by the Alachua County Office involved a local artist who contracted with someone to sell her paintings via the internet and to the art community in the New York and New Jersey market. Our client felt she was not getting a fair price for the items sold and asked that all of her artwork be returned to her. Initially the art dealer refused to return the paintings stating he was not able to pack them for shipping to insure their safe return. After months of negotiations by Seniors vs. Crime, the dealer safely returned all of the remaining paintings that were valued at approximately \$75,000 to \$100,000 dollars.

Seniors vs. Crime is located at the Alachua County Sheriff's office, 2621 SE Hawthorne Road, Gainesville, FL 32641. The office hours are Wednesdays and Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Seniors Versus Crime can be contacted by phone at (352) 367-4023 or (800) 203-3099 or email [atseniorsvscrime@alachuasheriff.org](mailto:atseniorsvscrime@alachuasheriff.org).

~~Regional Director, Barbara Thomas

# Obituaries and Identity Theft

## How to avoid being victimized after the death of a loved



Identity theft is a constant and growing concern for individuals as technological advances make it easier to obtain sensitive personal information. However a traditional practice from at least the 1800s has become a low-tech source of information to even the least technically-savvy identity thieves.

Obituaries have been used for centuries to commemorate a loved one and share final arrangements with the community.

Unfortunately, they have become a source of an individual's name, hometown and/or most recent address, a birth date, and often a mother's maiden name to guide an identity thief directly to an unsuspecting identity with minimal effort.

According to AARP's Sid Kirchheimer, author of *Scam Proof Your Life* (2006) a social security number can be obtained with a name, address, and as little as \$40. According to Kirchheimer, 400,000 checking accounts are opened each year in a deceased person's name.

To avoid obituary identity theft complete these steps **before** the obituary is published:

- Close existing checking and credit card accounts
- Notify Equifax, Trans Union, and Experian that the individual is deceased
- Contact the Social Security Administration to deactivate the deceased's social security number
- Mail copies of the death certificate to the closed accounts as well as the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the Social Security Administration



When writing the obituary try to keep information vague, especially the deceased's date of birth, most recent address, home town, and mother's maiden name.

Once the obituary is published, check the deceased's credit 4-6 weeks later to ensure identity theft has not occurred.

If you suspect identity theft, notify law enforcement immediately and obtain a police report. Contact banks and credit card companies with the deceased's accounts, especially shared accounts with the living, to notify them of the issue. Although the responsibility for a deceased's accounts does not ultimately fall on the living, those who are managing the deceased's final arrangements may avoid hurdles and headaches by being vigilant against the deceased's identity theft.

For more information on and reference for Sid Kirchheimer's recommendations see MSNBC's Today Show's website: <http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/18495531/ns/today-money/t/grave-robbery-stop-identity-theft-dead/> ~ Analyst Katie Fields

## Current Events




The Alachua County Sheriff's Office makes every effort to keep the public informed in regards to what actions we have taken. Our Public Information Office provides our press releases via our web site. Please click on the information star to be redirected to our site.



The ACSO web-site announcements section includes statements from the Sheriff, financial reports, and even a copy of this newsletter. Please follow the megaphone picture link to read our latest announcements.



 Another source of information is Crime Reports.com. The Crime Reports website allows us to share our crime statistics and other information in a easy to use map style. By signing up for the free account you can even be notified of crimes that occur in your area. Please follow the picture link to learn more.

Alachua County's Most Wanted felony warrants are constantly being updated. If you have information on any of these wanted subjects, please call the **Crime Stoppers Line at 352-372-7867**. All calls to the Crime Stoppers Line are confidential. Information that leads to an arrest, a gun recovery, and a weapons charge could result in a reward of up to \$1,000! You may also provide tips online at [www.alachuasheriff.org](http://www.alachuasheriff.org). Please help us fight crime in Alachua County. Click on the picture to see more.



Thank you for reading our publication. Please submit any feed back to [crimepreventiontips@alachuasheriff.org](mailto:crimepreventiontips@alachuasheriff.org). The Sheriff's Office has many programs please take a look at the links below and utilize the services that we provide.

[Teen Driver Challenge FREE \(Click Here\)](#)

[Rape Aggression Defense Course FREE \(Click Here\)](#)

[Explorer Program \(Click Here\)](#)

[Beat the Heat \(Click Here\)](#)

[Sexual Offender Search \(Click Here\)](#)

[Crime Reports.Com \(Click Here\)](#)

[Most Wanted \(Click Here\)](#)



The Alachua County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit is dedicated to making you safer. Please consider having a FREE home security survey or starting a residential crime watch. The Crime Prevention Unit also provides public safety classes on multiple topics including: internet safety, pedestrian safety, robbery prevention, good touch bad touch / stranger danger, and many more. To schedule any of the services listed above please call: **352-374-1800**.