



NEWSLETTER

SPRING EDITION 2020



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WHAT TO DO IN AN ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION



2019-2020

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Executive Director
John W. Jones

ACTIVE SHOOTER: WHAT YOU SHOULD DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF

In light of recent tragedies across the country and incidents that have occurred in our own state involving active shooters, it's important to understand what you can do if encountered with this violent situation.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), an active shooter is defined as an "individual engaged in attempting to kill people in a confined space or populated area." These incidents can happen anywhere and at any time, and victims are often selected at random.

Sheriffs' offices throughout Virginia have hosted presentations, including faith-based safety seminars for places of worship, that provide valuable information on how communities can better prepare and develop a plan to respond to an active shooter situation. All Virginia sheriffs are committed to ensuring our communities are equipped with information on how they can prepare for potential active shooter situations.

According to FEMA, if you are involved in an active shooter incident, **Run** and escape if you can. If you can't run, **Hide** and get out of the shooter's view and stay very quiet. And if you can't



hide, **Fight** and commit to your actions as aggressively as possible against the shooter.

Once law enforcement arrives on the scene, citizens should make their hands visible, avoid making any sudden movements, and should not rush toward the authorities. Here are a few things you can do to prepare for an active shooter situation:

- See something, say something.
- Before you run, know your exits.
- Find a place to hide.
- Learn first aid skills so you can help others.
- Help law enforcement.
- Seek help to cope with trauma.

Thanks to the generous support we receive from our members, we are able to provide important training and other critical education programs that promote the security of all Virginia citizens.

VSI SPRING CONFERENCE CANCELLED

The Virginia Sheriffs' Institute will not have its annual conference as originally scheduled for April 22-24, 2020.

The VSI Spring Conference is an important forum for sheriffs and deputies to discuss how legislation that passed during the 2020 General Assembly could impact the duties of public

safety officers in the Commonwealth of Virginia. VSI will be distributing pertinent information to the sheriffs' offices regarding new legislation.

The Virginia Sheriffs' Association's upcoming 87th Annual Conference will be held September 15-17 in Portsmouth, Virginia.

STOP BY VSA'S ONLINE STORE! 

At VSA's online store you will find high-quality men's and women's apparel, items for hunting, and other items that are perfect for gifts.

vsa.thepromomall.com

THE RISK OF TEXTING WHILE WALKING



As you know, drivers in Virginia are banned from texting while driving because it's distracting. Studies have shown that drivers who text while driving are more likely to become involved in an accident.

Yet, did you know that pedestrians who text are at a higher rate of causing an accident? In fact, according to researchers, a person who is texting or looking down at their phone is at a higher risk of causing an accident than someone talking on the phone or listening to music.

Specifically, the researchers found that pedestrians who were texting failed to look left and right when crossing the road. Indeed, as we've written about before, pedestrian fatalities continue to rise in Virginia and throughout the country.

According to the Governors Highway Safety Association, more than 6,000 pedestrian deaths were reported nationwide in 2018, the highest number in 20 years. Many of these deaths were due to distracted driving, walking, and texting with a cell phone.

As a reminder, pedestrians should cross streets at marked crosswalks and in well-lit areas, obey traffic signals, look before you cross the road, watch for turning vehicles and never assume vehicles will stop, wear bright/light colored clothing and reflective materials, and don't wear headphones or use a cell phone while crossing a street.

DRUG TAKE BACK DAY POSTPONED

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the National Prescription Drug Take Back Day has been postponed. No new date has been announced but we will update our supporters once new information becomes available.

This annual event helps residents safely dispose of unused, unwanted, and expired medications at their local law enforcement agencies. Once a new date is announced, you can find a list of participating locations by contacting your sheriff's office. This event helps prevent prescription drug abuse in communities and helps keep trace drugs out of our lakes and streams.

For more information, visit: <https://takebackday.dea.gov/>

SAFETY TIPS FOR RIDE SHARES



While this article may not directly impact you, it could provide some valuable information to someone you love. At a time when rideshare services, like Uber and Lyft, are gaining in popularity among millions of Americans nationwide, especially

younger Americans, we've all heard the disturbing stories about fake rideshare drivers who've committed heinous crimes against passengers.

Rideshare companies are providing passengers with some tips on how they can protect themselves if they use their services, including wait indoors for your ride until the app shows that the driver has arrived.

In addition, before you get in the car, check that the make and model matches the information that is listed on the app. Rideshare passengers should sit in the backseat and wear a seatbelt. Let a friend or family member know you are en route. Finally, don't share too much information with your driver and trust your instincts.

SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE MAY 1ST

The scholarship — funded by generous VSI supporters like you — is granted to full-time or part-time students majoring in criminal justice and attending a Virginia state college or university. With the help of loyal supporters like you, we awarded 94 scholarships for the 2019-2020 academic year to Virginia's youth.

A link to the scholarship applications is available on our website at <https://vasheriffsinstitute.org/scholarship/>. In addition to the application, students must submit high school or college transcripts, a copy of the student's voter registration card if the student is 18, and an essay. A full list of application materials can be found on the website. **Applications are due May 1, 2020.**

PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM VSI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JOHN W. JONES



On behalf of all of us at the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute, I hope you and your family are safe and healthy.

The coronavirus has changed the way we are currently living and interacting with each other. Our Virginia sheriffs and deputies continue to serve on the frontlines.

We want to thank our community for supporting the health care community, grocery store and delivery workers, and of course our public safety officials. Many communities have donated food, sanitizer, PPE and many other items, and we thank you for your support.

Over the next few weeks as we start exploring outside in the warmer weather, we want to urge drivers to be extra vigilant on our roadways. Please remember: COURTESY, CAUTION and COMMON SENSE are the most important rules of the road! As I mentioned in this newsletter, pedestrian deaths continue to rise in our state and throughout the country, so please stay alert for pedestrians and yield to them in crosswalks.

As always, I urge you to help public safety efforts in your community by reporting crimes and suspicious activity when you see them, so that we can do our very best to keep your community a safe place to work, play, live, and raise your families.

As Executive Director of VSI, I want to know what you consider important and necessary to keep our Commonwealth safe. I deeply appreciate your support and please continue to follow the safety and health guidelines put out by our government officials.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John W. Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive.

John W. Jones, Executive Director
Virginia Sheriffs' Institute
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DOOR-TO-DOOR & CORONAVIRUS SCAMS

With the arrival of the novel coronavirus to Virginia and the United States, we have seen scammers take advantage of this uncertain time by offering to sell fake cures and unproven treatments. Virginia public safety officials have joined with prosecutors and the FBI to create the Virginia Coronavirus Task Force, and we will share any new information with supporters that this new group reports.

I want to remind you of the potential for scammers to show up at your front door even during this time of social distancing. Here are a few tips offered on the Attorney General's official website that you can use to protect yourself from becoming a victim of a door-to-door scam:

- Don't let anyone into your house, unless you have a pre-scheduled appointment.
- Don't show your bill to anyone claiming to be a utility worker or service provider.
- Confirm any necessary work, upgrades, or offers with your service provider directly.
- Never sign any agreement if you feel pressured to sign it.
- Do not sign anything you have not read.
- Pay with a credit card, since you may be protected if there's a problem. Never pay in cash.
- Only deal with reputable contractors.
- Get a written contract that specifies price, work to be done, and time frame for completion.

Keep in mind the Virginia Home Solicitation Sales Act provides a buyer with the right to cancel a home solicitation sale until midnight of the third business day after the day on which the buyer signs an agreement or offer to purchase.

We Want to Hear from You ...

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The VSI solicits articles and comments from associate members of the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute for inclusion in this newsletter. Articles and comments should be directed to: John W. Jones, Executive Director, Virginia Sheriffs' Institute, 901 East Byrd Street, Suite 1301, Richmond, Virginia 23219, or phone (804) 225-7152.