



City of Tampa

Jane Castor, Mayor

Tampa Police Department

Lee Bercaw

Chief of Police

411 N. Franklin Street
Tampa, FL 33602

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Office (813) 276-3799

To our Tampa community,

The Tampa Police Department is deeply concerned about gun violence, especially when young members of our community are involved. Although there was an overall decrease in juvenile-related gun crime between 2022 and 2023, those involved with guns are at a significantly higher risk of injury or death, both to themselves and others. These incidents not only endanger the lives of innocent people but also represent a troubling national trend that we are committed to addressing in our hometown. Juveniles are more likely to make impulsive decisions and lack the experience to handle firearms safely. Additionally, the presence of a gun in a volatile situation can quickly escalate to tragedy, as evident on the night of October 29, 2023, and again on April 9, 2024.

While the Tampa Police Department is dedicated to arresting those involved in gun crimes, preventing these incidents from happening in the first place should be a shared goal for every member of our community. Reducing access to guns from those who should not have them is a focus of our PROJECT: Locked & Unloaded program, which provides free gun locks to responsible gun owners. In 2023, Tampa Police recovered almost 2,000 guns from the street. In the same year, 79% of all auto burglaries were to vehicles that were left unlocked. From those unlocked vehicles, 197 guns were stolen.

The Tampa Police Department focuses on reducing crime and building relationships with community members and is equally committed to building trust and positive relationships with young people through educational programs, mentorship initiatives, and community events. Access to youth-focused outlets and mentorship include our School Resource Officer program, Bigs in Blue, Police Athletic League (PAL), Resources in Community Hope (RICH) House program, the TPD Youth Academy, the TPD Police Explorer program, the Chief's Youth Advisory Council, and "Stay & Play", our partnership program with the City of Tampa Parks & Recreation Department.

We need the help of our community to further reduce, and ultimately prevent, gun crimes from occurring. We urge parents, guardians, role models, and mentors to secure firearms safely and keep them out of the reach of minors. Talk openly with your children about the dangers of guns and be

aware of your child's activities and social circles. Report any suspicious activity to the police before there is a chance for violence to escalate.

The safety of our community is our top priority. Law enforcement, parents, educators, social service providers, and all members of the community can create a safer environment for our youth, and, in the end, we will make Tampa safer, together.



Lee Bercaw
Chief of Police