



Animal Cruelty Is a Crime, Awareness Is Prevention

April is widely recognized as Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Month, a time to raise awareness and reinforce the responsibility we all share in protecting animals. While this issue receives special attention during April, Sheriff Christopher Blackmon and the Osceola County Sheriff's Office remain committed to this mission every day of the year.

Animal cruelty and neglect are serious crimes and often indicators of broader public safety concerns. Research and real-world cases show that violence toward animals can escalate to violence against people. In many situations, animal abuse is one of the first visible warning signs of deeper issues within a home or community.

Under Florida law, animal cruelty includes not only intentional harm, but also the failure to act. This means that denying necessary food, water, shelter, or medical care can result in criminal charges. Every individual who owns or has custody of an animal is legally responsible for its well-being.

Prevention depends on awareness and action. If you suspect animal abuse or neglect, report it promptly. Contact **Osceola County Animal Services** at **407-742-8000**, call **Crimeline** at **1-800-423-TIPS** to remain anonymous, or submit a report online at [Crimeline.org](https://www.crimeline.org). If the situation is immediate or life-threatening, call **911**. Providing details such as location, time, and any supporting information can make a critical difference in an investigation.

Protecting animals also means protecting our community. Early reporting can help prevent further harm and ensure both animals and people remain safe.



**PROMOTING INCLUSION,
FOSTERING UNDERSTANDING,
ENSURING SAFETY,
FOR EVERY INDIVIDUAL**

April is Autism Acceptance Month, a time to foster inclusion, understanding, and advocacy for people on the autism spectrum. April 2nd marks World Autism Awareness Day, and organizations like the Autism Society and Autism Speaks promote education, research, and support for autistic individuals.

Project Lifesaver

The Osceola County Sheriff’s Office partners with Project Lifesaver to protect children and adults with cognitive disorders who may wander. Participants wear a small transmitter that emits a tracking signal. If someone goes missing, caregivers notify the Sheriff’s Office, and trained specialists respond immediately. Most clients are found within a few miles from home, reducing search times from hours or days to about 30 minutes.



OCSO Autism Initiative: Decals for Awareness

Free decals are available for homes and vehicles to alert deputies that an occupant may have autism and could respond differently in emergency situations. Addresses can also be flagged in the dispatch system for those who prefer not to display a decal.

Request your decals here: www.osceolasheriff.org/autism
Learn more about Project Lifesaver: www.osceolasheriff.org/project-lifesaver

SHERIFF CHRISTOPHER A. BLACKMON, STATEWIDE DIRECTOR FOR THE LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN (LETR) FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS FLORIDA, AND THE OSCEOLA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE PROUDLY INVITE YOU TO THE

2026 LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN

FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 2026

THE RUN STARTS AT 9:30 AM AT THE OSCEOLA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
2601 E. IRLO BRONSON MEMORIAL HWY KISSIMMEE, FL 34744
REGISTRATION STARTS AT 7:30 A.M.

THE LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN IS A CAMPAIGN TO BENEFIT SPECIAL OLYMPICS. IT IS THE LARGEST GRASS-ROOTS FUNDRAISING FOR THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS.



INFO: CONTACT ANGEE VEGA 407-348-1105 EMAIL: ANGEE.VEGA@OSCEOLASHERIFF.ORG

2026 LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN

Sheriff Christopher A. Blackmon, and the Osceola County Sheriff's Office invite our community to join the 2026 Law Enforcement Torch Run in support of Special Olympics Florida.

More than just a run, the Torch Run is a symbol of unity, inclusion, and support for Special Olympics athletes. Deputies, law enforcement partners, community leaders, families, and supporters will carry the Flame of Hope and raise awareness and funds for programs that empower individuals with intellectual disabilities across our state.

We encourage residents, businesses, and community partners to cheer along the route or join the run. To participate, runners are required to purchase an official event shirt and complete a waiver on the day of the event. Shirt purchases directly support Special Olympics Florida, helping provide year-round sports training, competition, and opportunities for thousands of athletes.

Shirts are available for purchase online. Supplies are limited and may sell out quickly.

To order your shirt, visit:
<https://sheriff-forms.osceolasheriff.org/Forms/TorchRun>

The Torch Run is part of a larger effort to support Special Olympics, and you can continue that impact at our Tip a Cop event.

TIP A COP

Join us at **The Cup Diner in St. Cloud** on **Saturday, May 2, 2026**, from **7 a.m. to 11 a.m.** Our deputies will help serve the community, and every tip collected will go directly to Special Olympics Florida, supporting athletes with intellectual disabilities in sports, confidence-building, and goal achievement.

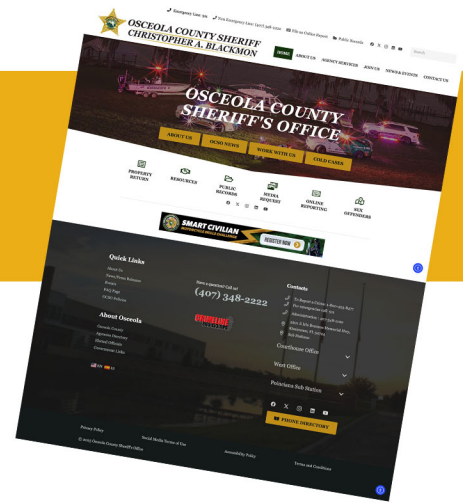
Stop by for a great meal, meet our deputies, and continue the mission of the Torch Run by making a meaningful difference in our community.

OSCEOLA COUNTY SHERIFF CHRISTOPHER A. BLACKMON

LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN **TIP-A-COP** FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Osceola County Deputies Volunteer As Waiters To Raise Awareness and Funds For Special Olympics Florida

Visit our website to see what's coming up:
www.osceolasheriff.org/ocso-events



April 4 & 25 - 8:00 am-5:00 pm

Teen Driver Challenge

Open to teens between the ages of 15 and 19 (Must have a learner's permit for six months or more.)

[View event details](#)



April 25 - 10:00 am-2:00 pm

DEA National Prescription Drug Take Back

Drop off unused or expired medications safely and help keep our community healthy.

[View event details](#)

STAY CONNECTED

Stay informed, see what is happening in our community, and get real time safety updates.

Follow us:



@OsceolaSheriff



HAVE YOU WATCHED OUR VIDEOS?

@OsceolaCountySheriffsOffice