

New Bedford Police Department teams up with the New England Patriots for “Lights On!” campaign

The New Bedford Police Department has teamed up with the New England Patriots to help make Massachusetts roads a bit safer.

The campaign called “Lights On!” is designed to help take the tension out of traffic stops that would have been citations for taillight and headlight violations. Instead of writing a commuter a fine, the police will hand out a voucher up to \$250 to get them fixed at a city repair shop.

New Bedford Police Chief Paul Oliveira said, “The last few years, unfortunately, you’ll only hear about the negative interactions and we know there’s been positive ones over the last few years. It’s really been a game changer for the men and women in the department. So now to be able to go out and have positive interactions with the public, interactions that were not always positive.”

Former Massachusetts DUA employee sentenced to prison for COVID-19 fraud scheme

“Defendant committed crimes shortly after release from federal prison on unrelated charges.”

A former employee of the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) was sentenced yesterday for conspiring to misuse her position in an effort to obtain Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) funds through fraudulent claims, including claims using identities she stole.

Tiffany Pacheco, a/k/a Tiffany Tavery, 36, formerly of New Bedford, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Indira Talwani to 42 months in prison and three years of supervised release. The defendant was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$199,555 and forfeiture of \$17,181. On Aug. 30, 2021, she pleaded guilty to six counts of wire fraud, one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and one count of aggravated identity theft.

Tiffany Pacheco was hired by the DUA in April 2020, shortly after her release from federal prison following a conviction for aggravated identity theft. While employed by DUA, Tiffany Pacheco abused her position and access to the PUA claim system to submit fraudulent claims using stolen identity information and to submit fraudulent PUA claim information on behalf of herself and her husband, Arthur Pacheco, who was incarcerated in Texas until Sept. 4, 2020, and thus ineligible for PUA funds. Tiffany Pacheco also induced a friend to continue her scheme after she was caught, charged and detained.

"Ms. Pacheco violated the public's trust by egregiously abusing her position as a DUA employee to perpetrate a fraud scheme that stole personal information from innocent victims and stole money from hardworking taxpayers," said United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins. "COVID-related assistance is intended to help hardworking American workers most affected by the pandemic. To take from these funds is to take from those experiencing legitimate hardship and genuine need. Adding insult to injury, Ms. Pacheco's job at DUA presented an opportunity for new beginnings following her previous felony conviction. However, she ruined that opportunity by engaging

in criminal behavior and refusing to change. Now she will be held responsible.”

“Pacheco abused her privileged access to the personal information of Massachusetts residents seeking unemployment assistance. She stole identities and manipulated records in the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance computer system in a scheme to enrich herself and her husband without regard for the lives of those whose identities were impacted or for the funds that should have gone to those in legitimate need,” said Matthew Millhollin, Special Agent in Charge for the Homeland Security Investigations’ New England Field Office.

“Tiffany Pacheco, while employed at the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA), engaged in a scheme to defraud the Department of Unemployment Assistance by applying for and receiving Pandemic Unemployment Assistance that she was not entitled to, using her own identity, her husband’s identity, and at least two stolen identities she accessed through DUA records. Pacheco abused her position at DUA by taking action on claims, including her husband’s claim, to secure just under \$200,000 in stolen benefits. The Office of Inspector General remains committed to protecting the integrity of the unemployment insurance program, particularly against those who attempt to use their positions of trust to enrich themselves at the expense of taxpayers,” said Special Agent-in-Charge Jonathan Mellone, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

Tiffany Pacheco abused her employment-related access to DUA’s online PUA claim system to submit and make changes to claims for five individuals. For two of these claims, she used personal identifying information (PII) obtained by virtue of her job at DUA, while other claims used PII that she had obtained independently. Tiffany Pacheco also used her access to the PUA claim system to make unauthorized eligibility determinations to prompt the payment of benefits and to increase the amount of payments. The total loss associated

with the fraudulent claims Tiffany Pacheco submitted using stolen PII is \$159,922.

In June 2020, PUA claims submitted for Tiffany Pacheco and her husband reflected 2019 income of \$0 and no dependents. In July 2020, via her employment with DUA, Tiffany Pacheco obtained access to the PUA computer system, and later changed claim information for herself and Arthur Pacheco in order to increase the amount of PUA funds they would receive. For example, Tiffany Pacheco increased the amount of 2019 income for her and Arthur Pacheco to more than \$240,000 and increased the number of their dependents to seven. Tiffany Pacheco further used her access to the PUA system to verify the increased 2019 income on both claims without the required income verification documents.

In November 2020, Arthur Pacheco called DUA and falsely denied that he had been incarcerated during the timeframe leading up to September 2020, and that he was only incarcerated for approximately one month. Tiffany Pacheco also spoke with DUA and misrepresented the period of time in which Arthur Pacheco had been incarcerated.

Additionally, Tiffany Pacheco instructed Donna Wasson – a friend who resided in Texas – to use the DUA customer portal to access PUA claims for two of the fraudulent claims Tiffany Pacheco had submitted using stolen PII. Tiffany Pacheco further instructed Wasson to pose as a claimant and directed Wasson to a Google Drive account that contained the images of driver's licenses and other documents under certain stolen identities. As a result, Wasson accessed unemployment claims under multiple stolen identities to fraudulently obtain benefits to which she was not entitled.

In September 2020, a search of the New Bedford apartment where Tiffany and Arthur Pacheco resided uncovered various tools of identity fraud, including an ID laminator, 100 blank ID cards, 68 hologram overlays, 150 card lamination sheets and 649

sheets of blank checks. Law enforcement also seized approximately \$17,000 cash and a notebook that contained the personal identifying information of various individuals. In addition, a driver's license recovered during the search matched the name of a victim Tiffany Pacheco used to submit another fraudulent PUA claim. On Sept. 23, 2020, DUA terminated Tiffany Pacheco's employment.

On Nov. 18, 2021, Arthur Pacheco was sentenced by Judge Talwani to one year in prison and three years of supervised release. Arthur Pacheco was also ordered to pay restitution and forfeiture in the amount of \$7,491. On March 8, 2022, Wasson was sentenced by U.S. District Court Chief Judge F. Dennis Saylor IV to 18 months in prison and two years of supervised release. Wasson was also ordered to pay restitution and forfeiture in the amount of \$5,437.

U.S. Attorney Rollins, HSI SAC Millhollin and DOL OIG SAC Mellone made the announcement today. The New Bedford Police Department, Massachusetts Parole Board and Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance, Program Integrity Unit provided valuable assistance with the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney William Abely, Chief of Rollins' Criminal Division and Assistant U.S. Attorney Dustin Chao, Chief of Rollins' Public Corruption and Special Prosecutions Unit, prosecuted the case. The investigation was conducted by Homeland Security's Investigation's Document and Benefit Fraud Task Force (DBFTF), a specialized field investigative group comprised of personnel from various local, state, and federal agencies with expertise in detecting, deterring, and disrupting organizations and individuals involved in various types of document, identity, and benefit fraud schemes.

On May 17, 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate

and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the Department's response to the pandemic, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>." -Massachusetts Department of Justice.

New Bedford High School students go on history walk on city's 175th anniversary

"Did you know that yesterday was a milestone birthday for New Bedford?

While the town dates to 1787, New Bedford officially became a City 175 years ago, in 1847 – and coincidentally, a new generation of residents learned about local history on a walk through downtown.

New Bedford High School students and history teacher Michael Gryss posed for a photo while visiting the Fishing Heritage

Center and other locations, learning about the past 175 years – and what might be ahead in the next.” -City of New Bedford.



New Bedford Public Schools photo.

Massachusetts RMV announces road test applicants will now need to use their own vehicles

Applicants for tests must bring a qualified sponsor and a vehicle to use that meets all requirements New informational webpage with videos, road test checklist links and applications now available at [Mass.Gov/RoadTest](https://www.mass.gov/RoadTest).

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The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) is informing Class D learner's permit holders applying for a Massachusetts issued driver's license that all applicants will be required to supply their own vehicle for road testing beginning on Monday, May 2, 2022.

Due to the pandemic and health and safety protocols, since June of 2020, the RMV deployed a fleet of Commonwealth-owned vehicles for road tests which were cleaned and sanitized on a regular basis. The use of these Commonwealth-owned vehicles will end on April 29, 2022. Applicants for a Class M, or Motorcycle license, supply their own motorcycle for testing. Applicants scheduled for testing through a driving school should confirm they have access to the school's vehicle for their road test.

"Vehicles on loan from our MassDOT Highway Division partners and other Commonwealth agencies' vehicles allowed us to continue road testing and licensing in a safe and healthy manner during the State of Emergency and continued COVID-19 restrictions," said Registrar of Motor Vehicles Colleen Ogilvie. "As we prepare for the transition back to private cars, we want applicants to be aware of our requirements and to be prepared to arrive sufficiently skilled behind the wheel to pass the road test on their first try."

Applicants must bring a physical copy of their learner's permit, a printed and completed copy of the Road Test Application and be accompanied by a qualified sponsor. A sponsor is a person who is a licensed driver over the age of 21 with at least one year of experience driving. Should it be required, the sponsor will be responsible for operating the vehicle if at any point the road test examiner determines the applicant cannot continue testing.

In addition to meeting the application and sponsor qualifications, the applicant must make sure the vehicle brought for testing meets all functional and safety requirements. Some practices adopted during the pandemic will continue – license applicants will be asked to keep open windows for ventilation. The use of face coverings is strongly encouraged, but not required, for all vehicle occupants during the road test.

Private passenger vehicles used for a Class D road test must meet the following requirements, (including vehicles with an ignition interlock device, and vehicles with adaptive equipment for a competency test):

- Be in good working condition and be able to pass a safety check.
- Have a valid registration and current inspection sticker.
- Contain adequate seating accommodations next to the operator for the use of the examiner and have a rear seat for the sponsor.
- Be designed to let the examiner make an emergency stop using the parking brake. If not, the vehicle cannot be used for the road test.
- Any vehicle with a center console that does not have a parking brake as part of the console cannot be used.
- Any vehicle that does not allow the examiner unobstructed access to the parking brake cannot be used.

Customers are advised that if the road test examiner identifies any of the following conditions, the road test will not go forward and rescheduling will be the responsibility of the applicant:

- Road test examiner identifies the applicant and/or sponsor is displaying signs of alcohol or substance impairment.
- Road test examiner identifies an odor of cannabis or alcohol emanating from the applicant and/or sponsor; including from their clothing or from inside the vehicle to be used for the

road test.

- Road test examiner observes present minor children, including babies in car seats, or animals, other than trained service animals, which cannot be unsupervised at the Service Center during the test.

The RMV has a new webpage to help applicants locate all information related to their road test, [Mass.Gov/RoadTest](https://www.mass.gov/RoadTest). The page includes information on what to expect, videos to help prepare for the road test, links to checklists and applications to increase an applicant's chance of passing their exam.

New Bedford Police Department mark anniversary of Sgt. Michael Cassidy's passing

"Today marks the one-year anniversary of the passing of Sgt. Michael Cassidy. We ask that you take a moment to reflect upon his contributions to our community as a police officer, and his dedication to family as a Father, husband and son.

Mike, you were a friend to all who knew you. Your absence pains us still. Until we meet again..." -New Bedford Police Department.

New Bedford roadwork sites for the upcoming week of May 2, 2022 – May 6, 2022, and they are as follows

The City of New Bedford has roadwork sites for the upcoming week of May 2, 2022 – May 6, 2022, and they are as follows:

Eversource will be working on the gas main relays and services at:

- Main relay on Phillips Rd from Holly Tree Lane to Route 140
- Main relay on Belleville Ave from LIP Regulator Outlet to Sawyer St

Other:

- City of New Bedford (DPI) will be filling potholes on a continuous basis.
- City crews (DPI) will be conducting hydrant flushing from 7am-3pm in the following areas: Saturday (5/7) at the Industrial Park along Braley Road, Church Street, Phillips Road, Duchaine Blvd, Samuel Barnett Blvd, and John Vertente Blvd. Sunday (5/8) at the Fish Houses along Coggeshall Street and North Front Street, Herman Melville Blvd, MacArthur Drive from Front Street to Cove Street
- Contractor (PA Landers) will be working at the MassDOT project, Kings Highway, for road and sidewalk reconstruction along portions of Kings Highway and Tarkiln Hill Rd.
- Contractor (JH Lynch) will continue work at MassDOT project, intersection improvements at Rockdale Ave and Allen Street. Detours may be in place at times. Signage and police details posted for detours.
- Contractor (KR Resendez) will continue work at the MASSDOT project, intersection improvements at Hathaway Rd and Nauset

Street.

- Contractor (PA Landers) will be working on sidewalk reconstruction along a portion of Cove Road from Padanaram Avenue to Orchard Street.
- Contractor (PA Landers) will be conducting test pits on Cedar Street from Hillman Street to Mill Street.
- Contractor (PA Landers) will continue road reconstruction work on Orchard St from Arnold St to Union St.
- Contractor (PA Landers) will be working on various streets, citywide, completing minor repairs and installations.
- Contractor (SOLitude Lake Management) to conduct water quality treatment, by boat, on Sassaquin Pond. This treatment has been approved by the New Bedford Conservation Commission and has obtained a permit from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.
- Contractor (SCR Constructors) will continue site work at the future South Coast Rail station platform locations in the city. (Church St at Carlisle St and Wamsutta St at Acushnet Ave.) If you have questions, please email the project team at SouthCoastRail@dot.state.ma.us

**** Please note: Contractors will continue to follow guidelines and protocol regarding COVID-19 social distancing while conducting work in construction zone.**

Design firm selected to begin work on New Bedford-Fairhaven replacement

Today, Rep. Bill Straus (D-Mattapoisett) announced that the Massachusetts Department of Transportation has selected a

design firm to begin work on the replacement of the New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge. The selection comes in the midst of ongoing consultations between Rep. Straus, who has served as the House co-chair of the legislature's Joint Committee on Transportation since 2011, and Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver concerning the status of the project.

According to the announcement, MassDOT has selected the engineering firm of Modjeski and Masters to undertake the effort to advance the bridge replacement to the 25% design threshold. MassDOT and the firm are finalizing the terms of the scope of work agreement under which MassDOT will hold public hearings, receive public and stakeholder input and generate design documents to a 25% design level of completion. This design threshold is necessary to begin permit and funding requests for eventual removal and construction of a new Route 6 bridge over the Acushnet River between Fairhaven and New Bedford. A completed written scope of work is expected by the end of May.

"We have determined that Modjeski and Masters has the experience, expertise and skill to start work on the preliminary design and public input phase of this important bridge project which affects not only the road traffic but the efficient operation of the maritime needs in the Port of New Bedford," said Administrator Gulliver.

"I want to thank the Baker-Polito Administration and especially Administrator Gulliver for further advancing the project as basic design work is the necessary pre-condition to get our project to a point where construction funding requests are possible," said Rep. Straus.

Based in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, Modjeski and Masters has offices throughout the country and is a world-wide engineering firm specializing in bridge design and engineering.

One arrested after striking New Bedford Police Officer with vehicle, fleeing scene

"The NBPD has arrested a man after he struck an officer with his motor vehicle and fled the scene.

On April 28th, at approximately 2 a.m., west-end patrol officers were dispatched to the Kempton Street/Jenney Street intersection regarding a male passed out behind the wheel of a vehicle. Upon arrival, the vehicle was found to be parked facing the wrong way on Kempton Street, with an operator whom the officers could not awaken. While attempting to breach the window, the operator woke up, and when he attempted to flee the scene, he deliberately struck one of the responding officers with his vehicle in the process.

The operator led officers on a pursuit which ultimately ended on Route 24 north with the assistance of the Massachusetts State Police. The operator was identified as Mr. ROBERT MILLER, 30, of 31 Kings Terrace in Pembroke.

Among various motor vehicle violations, MILLER was also charged with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, failure to stop for police, assault and battery on a police officer, and OUI liquor. Later in court, Miller was found dangerous and ordered held without bail.

The officer who was struck was admitted to the hospital for non-life-threatening injuries." -New Bedford Police Department.

MSP, New Bedford Police, US Marshals arrest domestic violence suspect living on Fairhaven sailboat

“Earlier this week, the Massachusetts State Police Violent Fugitive Apprehension Section (VFAS), members of a US Marshals Task Force, and New Bedford Police located and arrested a domestic violence suspect from Maine who was living on a sailboat off the coast of Fairhaven, Mass.

Last week, MSP VFAS Trooper Phil Giardino and New Bedford Police Detective Jay Gangi, who both also serve as officers on a US Marshals Task Force, received a lead from USMS Task Force counterparts in Maine regarding suspect ERIC WAITE, 52. The information suggested that WAITE might be living on the sailboat off of Pope’s Island, which is situated near the mouth of the Acushnet River, between Fairhaven and New Bedford.

New Bedford Police identified the sailboat in question, and VFAS Troopers worked with the State Police Marine Unit and New Bedford Marine Unit to develop a plan to approach the boat (pictured).

Early on the morning of Tuesday, April 26, VFAS Troopers boarded an MSP Marine Unit vessel and New Bedford Police, US Marshals, and members of the US Marshals Task Force boarded a NBPD Marine Unit vessel. The two boats left the State Pier and traveled to the sailboat. VFAS Troopers located WAITE on board. WAITE attempted to provide officers with a phony name but they were able to confirm his identity and place him under

arrest as a fugitive from justice. He taken back to shore and transported in a cruiser to the State Police-Dartmouth Barracks for booking.

The Maine warrant charges WAITE with the crimes of domestic violence and terrorizing. WAITE claimed the boat was given to him.” -Massachusetts State Police.

Day of Portugal Comes to New Bedford in June

After a two-year hiatus, the Day of Portugal, Camões and the Portuguese Communities celebrate its 25th year on June 3th, 4th and 5th of June with a new venue.

The festivities will take place at the Senhor Da Pedra feast grounds on 81 Thinkham Street, New Bedford with the usual Azorean and Local artisans as well local folkloric groups, local bands and traditional Portuguese foods.

On Friday, June 10th the official Day of Portugal, Camões and the Portuguese Communities, we will be raising the flag in front of City Hall at 6:30 P.M. The program includes the students from the Discovery Language Academy and the Children’s Folkloric group who will perform in front of City Hall and the Whaling Museum. A reception will follow with traditional Portuguese “Comes e Bebes”.

This is also a great opportunity for the community to appreciate the Present exhibit at the Whaling Museum, The Azorean Spirit, The Art of Domingos Rebelo.

Golf Tournament, our biggest fundraiser will return at a later date a large portion of these funds will go towards scholarship awards to deserving students.