

Tioga County Sheriff's Office



**From
Sheriff Gary W. Howard**

**News Release
Thursday, January 16, 2025**

Tioga County Sheriff Gary Howard announced today that the Tioga County Sheriff's Office is adopting the Blue Envelope Program which is an important safety program for drivers with autism. Sheriff Howard said "There are many adult drivers who are living with autism. A driver's physical movements or verbal responses which would normally be appropriate during a traffic stop may be beyond an autistic driver's control. There have been some unfortunate incidents where, during a traffic stop of a person with autism, the officer has misinterpreted the driver's movements, or the driver's failure to appropriately respond to requests or to directions. This has sometimes led to an escalation of the situation and resulted in a bad outcome".

To address this problem, law enforcement agencies around the country have recently begun adopting the Blue Envelope Program. They are encouraging drivers with autism to obtain a Blue Envelope, in which the drivers can keep their license, registration, insurance card or other relevant documents, which a police officer would normally request upon a traffic stop. In this way, when the police officer sees the Blue Envelope, the officer is immediately alerted to the driver's autism and can adjust his or her own actions and reactions to fit that situation. The New York State Sheriffs' Association is promoting this program statewide and many Sheriff's Offices are rolling out the program in their county, including Sheriff Howard. The Sheriff is encouraging his deputies and other law enforcement officers in the county to be aware of the significance of the Blue Envelope if one is presented by the driver during a traffic stop. Drivers with autism can come to the Sheriff's Office to obtain one for their use. The Blue Envelopes are available at the Tioga County Sheriff's Office at the Records Division service window.

Approved by Captain T. Yaeger
Posted 1/16/25 1:15 PM by Diane Rockwell

