

2025 ANNUAL MEETING

HRWG

Homicide Research Working Group

Sheraton Sand Key Resort

The Sheraton Sand Key Resort boasts a beautiful beachfront pool overlooking the azure Gulf of Mexico and a 13-acre private white sand beach. There can be gorgeous views, especially at sunset. Grab an afternoon snack at the Island Grille, a tropical drink at the Poolside Café, or relax in the Mainstay Tavern. Of course, you can just kick back and relax by the pool.

Lodging Information

Location	Rates	Amenities
1160 Gulf Boulevard Clearwater Beach, Florida 33767 (727) 595-1611	Affordable HRWG rates are available but book soon. If the block sells out an alternative near-by hotel will be available.	Fitness room, gift shop, Wi-Fi, dining and bars, a pool, back access, outdoor games, and tennis courts.

Welcome!

Welcome to the 2025 Annual Meeting of the Homicide Research Working Group. The meeting is being held Tuesday, June 10th through Friday, June 13th at the Sheraton Sand Key Resort in beautiful Clearwater Beach, Florida.



DINING OPTIONS IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA

HRWG Meals will be available Tuesday (including the opening reception), as well as breakfast and lunch on Wednesday and Thursday. Breakfast will be available Friday morning. Dinners for each night will be on your own. For some options, as well as places for those arriving early or staying after the conference, here are some restaurants in the near vicinity of the conference site that were open when preparing this guide. Here's hoping none have closed since!

Dining in the Sheraton Sand Key Resort

Rusty's Bistro

A nice restaurant with a good local reputation, replete with live jazz Thursday-Saturday. We will be having our breakfast and lunches served in this facility, but it is best known for its dinner fare. Hours: Mon-Sat 7:00-11:30am and 6:00-10:00pm; Sun 7:00am-12:00pm and 6:00-10:00pm. Reservations are recommended.



Mainstay Tavern

In addition to providing a nice bar setting to get away on off-meeting hours, the Mainstay Tavern also serves American bar-style fare (sandwiches, etc.). Hours: Mon-Thurs 4:00 pm-2:00am; Fri-Sun 12:30pm-2:00am. Kitchen closes at 11:00pm.

Poolside Café & Slo Joe's Poolside Turtle Bar

Grab-n-go items such as pizza, chef's salad, chicken salad sandwich, hot dogs, and chicken tenders. Located poolside under a shaded deck. Hours: 11:00am - sunset. Or, just hang out at Slo Joe's Bar located next to the pool to enjoy an endless variety of concocted beverages.

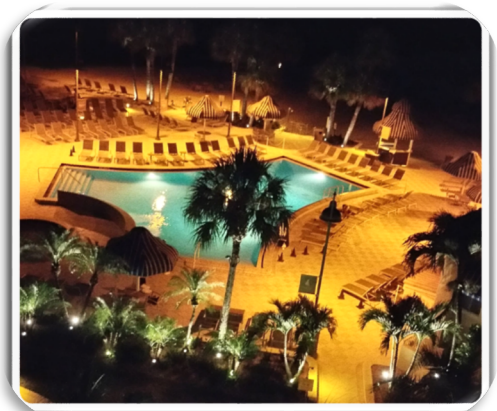


Photo Courtesy of Lin Huff-Corzine

Local Dining

There are a number of shopping and dining options within a 5-10 minute walk of the Sheraton Sand Key, several at the Shoppes on Sand Key less than 1/4 mile away.



Columbia Restaurant

The Columbia is located at 1241 Gulf Blvd at the Shoppes on Sand Key. Open 11:30am-10:00pm daily. Billed as the oldest restaurant in Florida and the largest Spanish restaurant in the world. It has a varied menu with outside dining on the water. 1905 salad and Cuban sandwiches are great. A HRWG group dinner may be held here on Wednesday night.

<https://www.columbiarestaurant.com/sand-key-clearwater>

Maggie Mae's Waterfront Cafe

Maggie Mae's is located at 1261 Gulf Blvd (#104) at the Shoppes on Sand Key; open 7:00am-2:30pm daily. It has a diner style atmosphere serving up full American breakfasts and casual lunches.

<https://maggiemaeswaterfront.com/>



Backwater's

Backwater's on Sand Key is located at 1261 Gulf Blvd (#130) at the Shoppes on Sand Key and is open 11:00am-10:00pm. Great seafood and steak selections with covered deck dining on the water.

<https://www.backwatersonsandkey.com>

Watercolour Grillhouse

Located in the Marriott at 1201 Gulf Blvd (across the street from Sheraton), the Watercolour Grillhouse features steaks, seafood, sandwiches, salads and more, all in a waterfront setting with both indoor and outdoor seating. Phone: 727-953-1661. Click [here](#) for more information.



Local Dining (Continued)



Shorty's Grocery and Gourmet Deli

A grocery/deli offering a variety of deli fare made on the spot in a surprisingly nice setting. It has a good wine selection to go with the meal or bottles to purchase. Outdoor seating is available. Located in the Shoppes on Sand Key, 1261 Gulf Blvd. (#125)

www.shortysonthedeck.com



Dunkin' Donuts

Ah, good ol' Dunkin's. They close at 10 p.m., so if you get a doughnut or Dunkin coffee craving after dinner, it is located in the Shoppes on Sand Key.

Kohr's Family Ice Cream

Just in case you need a quick ice cream or yogurt fix, they are also located in the Shoppes on Sand Key near the Columbia Restaurant. Caveat: It rates hit and miss in on-line reviews.



Dining Just Off Sand Key Island

A bit of a walk or a quick trolley ride takes one to this location at the base of the Sand Key bridge. There are a number of other restaurants and bars along the 600 – 300 blocks of Gulfview Blvd. so if you're out and about you may find others to just drop in and give them a try.

Cesare's

Located at 794 S. Gulfview Blvd, Cesare's serves dinner daily. It features homemade pastas, pappardelle with wild mushrooms, ossobuco milanese, filet mignon in a brandy sauce, fresh seafood, veal classics and homemade desserts. Dine in or *al fresco* overlooking the water and Sand Key Bridge.

<https://cesareatthebeach.com/>



And Even More Dining Options

Away from the resort but many say these are worth the trip!



Bob Heilemann's Beachcomber Restaurant

447 Mandalay Ave., Clearwater Beach (727) 442-4144

Seafood, steaks, and is known for their fried chicken dinner, as well as being a little more upscale in an "Old Florida" setting. Is located four blocks north of the roundabout (SR 60), so is best accessed by car or trolley ride. Will accept reservations. To learn more:

<https://www.bobheilmanbeachcomber.com/>

Starlite Majesty Cruise & Dinner

Clearwater Beach Marina near the roundabout (727) 462-2628

A cruise aboard a large yacht has a number of dinner options. It boards at 6:30 p.m. and departs at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday – Sunday. The cruise is \$29.95; dinners run \$20-\$35 extra, plus beverage. Reservations required. See the concierge for possible discounts. For full information, check out their website at:

<https://www.starlitecruises.com/cruises/evening-yacht-cruise-clearwater.html>



Frenchy's

The Frenchy's chain has a set of restaurants that are both local and tourist favorites for good food and very "beachy" atmospheres. From the Sand Key, all of those below are located reasonably close together on the other (north) side of the roundabout (SR 60). Information about Frenchy's restaurants can be accessed from a common website: <http://frenchysonline.com/>. This site provides maps to each. It is probably best to get there by car or trolley. Reservations are not accepted at any of the locations. The Frenchy's chain has a set of restaurants that are both local and tourist favorites for good food and very "beachy" atmospheres. From the Sand Key, all of those below are located reasonably close together on the other (north) side of the roundabout (SR 60). Information about Frenchy's restaurants can be accessed from a common website: <http://frenchysonline.com/>. This site provides maps to each their locations. It is probably best to get there by car or trolley.

Reservations are not accepted at any of the locations.

Frenchy's Saltwater Café

419 Poinsettia Ave, Clearwater Beach (727-461-6295)
Great for grouper sandwiches, other fish sandwiches and platters, hamburgers, onion rings, fries. Very casual, indoor and outdoor seating. Prices are reasonable for food and bar. Open from 11:00 a.m. to 11 p.m. Distance from resort – 2.2 miles. Parking is available in the immediate vicinity.



Frenchy's Original Café

41 Baymont St, Clearwater Beach (727-446-3607)
Great for grouper sandwiches, other fish sandwiches and platters, hamburgers, onion rings, fries. Very casual, indoor seating. Prices are reasonable for food and bar. Open from 11:00 a.m. to 11 p.m. Distance from resort 2.5 miles. Better to take a car; parking along the street, however, can be a little tricky.

Frenchy's Rockaway Grill

7 Rockaway St, Clearwater Beach (727-446-4844)
Same food fare as the others, but with more parking and overlooks the beach (has direct beach access). It is located a little further north from French's Original, so is about 4 miles from the resort.



Transportation

The drive from the Tampa International Airport to the Sheraton Sand Key is 45-60 minutes, depending on traffic. There are a number of options for getting to the resort. Commensurate with inflation, the rides have gotten to be pricey so you may have to do some internet shopping around. There's also an information desk in the baggage area that may provide some additional options.

SuperShuttle & ExecuCar

SuperShuttle provides both shared-ride and private van service. ExecuCar provides sedan service with meet and greet in the terminal; additional premium rides and services are available. For more information on SuperShuttle and ExecuCar services or to book your transportation online in advance, check out the SuperShuttle website: <https://www.supershuttle.com/locations/tampatpa/>.

Shuttle Finder

An alternative service found on-line is Shuttle Finder (<https://www.shuttlefinder.com/tpa/l/sheraton-sand-key-resort>). Advance reservations are required.

Taxi Service

Taxi service is available and will cost approximately \$60-\$75 one way.

Car Rental

For those who want freedom and adventure in getting around Clearwater and Clearwater Beach, cars can be rented at the Tampa airport. Reserve through the usual sites (e.g., Expedia, Travelocity, or directly with the rental company). Parking at the Sheraton Sand Key is \$15 per day.

Uber and Lyft

Of course, for those who use these services, they are worth checking out on your own. Prices will vary considerably depending on the time of day that the ride is requested.

Jolly Trolley

You can get around Clearwater and Clearwater Beach on the Jolly Trolley. The Sheraton Sand Key is a regular stop on the trolley route every 30 minutes. For routes and stops, check out their website: <http://www.clearwaterjolleytrolley.com>. Also, the concierge at the Sand Key can direct you to a brochure rack with the schedules. **HOTEL PERK!** Show your Sheraton San Key Resort room key and the ride is free.

ALLEGiant AIRLINE (TYPICALLY A LOWER COST OPTION) FLIES INTO THE ST. PETERSBURG-CLEARWATER AIRPORT: Check out transportation options here: <https://www.supershuttle.com/locations/stpetersburgclearwaterpie/>.

Detailed Driving Directions to the Sheraton Sand Key

Resort Address: 1160 Gulf Blvd, Clearwater Beach, FL 33767 (727) 595-1611

Getting to the Sheraton Sand Key by car can be a bit tricky, so here are some detailed directions that may assist those of you driving to the conference or renting a car and driving from one of the area airports. **If you have the ability to use GPS, this may be your best bet!** **NOTE:** These directions are keyed to those driving in from other locations as if they were passing by, or were landing at, the Tampa International Airport. Anyone using the St. Petersburg-Clearwater airport may find that the directions would be different to get to Clearwater (ask at the rental desk), but once on State Road (SR) 60, the directions become the same.

Driving on I-275 South, take Exit 39: Tampa Airport, SR 60 West, Veterans, Clearwater.

Once on SR 60, move to the second from outside lane. Be Alert! Within a short distance, there's a 3-way split. You will want to stay with the middle option – "SR 60 Clearwater."

If renting a car, as you leave the airport, there is a right exit for SR 60 Clearwater.

From there, everyone's on SR 60 West heading toward Clearwater. The Sheraton Sand Key is about 20 miles away. Depending on the time of day and traffic, it's a drive of 30-60 minutes. So here we go:

- After a few lights (you'll see several hotels as well as beach restaurants, especially on the left hand side of the highway), you'll enter a long strip of highway that runs across what is known as Old Tampa Bay, providing a rather scenic driving view. Locally, this stretch is dubbed the Courtney Campbell Causeway.
- You'll finally begin coming into a more congested, urban area and will pass under two overpasses a couple of miles apart. Be sure you've packed your patience – it's pretty much stop and go from here with a lot of traffic lights.
- Stay on SR 60 West through a number of twists and turns. Don't be confused by this road also being designated U.S. 19 ALT as well as several local street names as you continue along. There are signs directing you to "the beach."
- You'll eventually find yourself going through a downtown area. Keep truckin' on SR 60 West. As you leave downtown, you'll go over a large bridge. It's a scenic view, with the Intercoastal Canal on your left and the Gulf of Mexico to your right.
- As you come off the bridge, you'll find yourself on the Clearwater Memorial Causeway. Continue on this, and you're advised to get into the right hand (outside) lane. This stretch brings you into the municipality of Clearwater Beach.
- Traffic often slows at this point because the road leads to a roundabout, undoubtedly designed by a traffic engineer with a perverse sense of humor.
- Carefully traverse your way around the roundabout, but continue on the outside, eventually bearing to your right. A landmark is a large pink hotel – you'll want to be driving toward it. If you miss it the first time, just circle the roundabout and give it a second try.
- Shortly after you circumvent the roundabout, veer right onto Gulfview Blvd. You'll continue on this road for a while. Take Note: it's a densely populated area with lots of foot and automobile traffic, so be alert.

(CONTINUED)

- IF YOU MISS GULFVIEW BLVD: Fear not, just continue down what has now become Coronado Drive. You will continue past a number of hotels. Look to your right and you'll see several streets, which will take you over to Gulfview Blvd.
- Continuing on Gulfview Blvd, you will soon come to a large bridge with a sign directing you to a right exit for Sand Key Park. Take this exit. The street becomes Gulf Blvd.
- You'll go over this bridge, again being treated to some great scenery.
- Once off the bridge, heads up -- you'll see a turn-in for Sand Key Park on your right. The entrance for the Sheraton Sand Key is just down from this, also on your right. It's just before a high rise Marriott Hotel on the left.
- Turn in and proceed to the front entrance where the hotel staff will greet you on your arrival. Good news – parking is free!

What to Wear



The weather in Florida at this time of year tends to be muggy and warm with daytime temperatures in the 80s and 90s and nighttime temperatures in the 60s and 70s. Mornings are usually pretty nice but are often followed by hot, cloudy afternoons that often end with a rainstorm. It cools down at night, especially with sea breezes. If you intend to be out and about during the day, consider bringing an umbrella.

Casual to business casual clothing is the norm for HRWG meetings. Dress comfortably and for the weather, though note that Floridians like to crank up the air conditioning and it can be cool in the meeting rooms.

Safe travels and we'll see you at the Meeting!

Program Chair: Amber Scherer

Program Committee Members: Kayla Toohy

Local Arrangements Committee Chair: Kayla Toohy

Committee Members: Kayla Toohy, Dwayne Smith, & James Alan Fox

Appreciation is extended to Brandis Baines-Waiz, formerly of the Office of Graduate Studies at the University of South Florida, for the original design work she provided in preparing this guide.