

WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

A weekly update for residents, visitors, and workers in the District of Columbia



Friday, March 25, 2011

DO YOUR PART TO PREVENT THEFTS FROM AUTO AND AUTO THEFTS AT GAS STATIONS

The MPD would like to raise the public's awareness about a common crime tactic perpetrated by thieves. These thieves target unsuspecting vehicle owners when they are pumping gas or paying the tab in the station. Purses and other valuables, which are often visible or easily accessible from passenger side of a vehicle, are the main targets. To simplify things for the thief, the vehicle is often left unlocked. The thefts normally take place when the victim is most distracted – when he or she is pumping gas or going into the station to pay for a purchase. A suspect vehicle will drive up next to the victim's auto, quickly open the unlocked door, and grab any easily-accessible items. Then they will just as quickly drive off. It happens in a matter of seconds.

These sorts of thefts can be prevented when the appropriate precautions are taken. Below are some helpful tips on how to avoid becoming a victim:

- Pick stations that are well-lit and have video-surveillance cameras at the pump.
- Make a list of favorite gas stations along your regular travel routes. Stations near police departments and state police barracks are good choices.
- Always remove your keys and lock the car doors while you are pumping gas. If you sense danger and you have a panic button on your car keys, keep your hands on the panic button until help arrives.
- Keep valuables out of sight in your vehicle and lock the doors, even if you are going inside for just a moment.
- It might be worthwhile to wait for the pump nearest to the attendant or building.
- Pay attention to your surroundings.
- Don't be distracted by your cell phone.

» Learn more about how you can reduce the risk of having property in your car – or your vehicle – stolen, by watching the video and downloading additional information at:

<http://mpdc.dc.gov/gasstationsafety>

OPERATE MINIBIKES AND OTHER SMALL VEHICLES RESPONSIBLY

Like cars and trucks, motorcycles, motorized bicycles, Segways, and mopeds must be operated safely on city streets. Minibikes, ATVs, and dirt bikes are designed for off-road use and may not be driven on city streets or sidewalks.

It is illegal to ride or operate a minibike, dirt bike or All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) on the District's streets or sidewalks. It is okay to ride bicycles, mopeds, motorized bicycles, Segways, and motorcycles on the street, but not on city sidewalks.*

No matter what or where you ride, obey traffic and safety laws and yield to pedestrians. And don't forget to wear a helmet for your own protection!

» Get more information on regulations on operating small motorized vehicles in the District of Columbia, as well as helpful posters and fliers online at:

<http://mpdc.dc.gov/minibike>

Vehicles That Are Legal On DC Streets (not sidewalks)*	Vehicles That Are Illegal On DC Streets or Sidewalks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Motorcycle• Moped• Bicycle (<i>Motorized or Non-Motorized</i>)• Segway	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All Terrain Vehicle (ATV)• Minibike• Dirt Bike

* *Non-motorized bicycles may be ridden on the sidewalk in neighborhoods outside the central business district.*

MPD OFFERS REMINDERS ABOUT PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

The Metropolitan Police Department would like to remind everyone to be aware of their surroundings to ensure the safe travels of other drivers and pedestrians on our city streets. Drivers are reminded to be vigilant in looking out for pedestrians. When walking or exercising, especially in the early morning or at dusk or dark, pedestrians should keep the following tips in mind:

- Stay on the sidewalk, not in the street; only cross the street in crosswalks with traffic control devices.
- Look both ways before crossing the street.
- Never run between cars into the street.
- Wear clothing that allows drivers and people to see you. That means no dark clothes after dark or early in the morning.
- Exercising outdoors at dusk or at night can be dangerous without some type of reflective device on your clothing. Many athletic shoes have reflective qualities built in, but also consider a vest complete with reflective tape.
- Keep alert! Dawn and dusk offer convenient shadows for muggers and other crooks.

Runners are also reminded to ALWAYS carry identification with them when they go out. If carrying a license seems too inconvenient, please consider purchasing an identification bracelet or tag for your shoe. New products designed especially for runners, bikers and other athletes have recently come on the market. A simple internet search for “identification bracelet” will provide numerous results.

DPW OFFERS GRAFFITI REMOVAL SERVICES

Graffiti is generally described as a drawing or inscription made on any exterior surface—from street signs to sidewalks—for the purpose of being seen by the public. The inscription can be rudimentary or elaborate, colorful or plain black. Gang members use graffiti to define territory and intimidate rivals.

The DC Department of Public Works (DPW) deploys graffiti removal crews to clean graffiti from public space and private property, such as sidewalks, bridges and exterior walls. When power washing is impractical, our crews resort to more low-tech methods, such as simply painting over the graffiti. “Tags,” those spray-painted black squiggles sometimes found on traffic signs, fences or metal garage doors, are often removed with chemical-treated cleaning cloths.

Owners of private property may request graffiti removal services from the city. Although the service is free, property owners must read and sign a graffiti removal waiver of liability form. Unfortunately, DPW can’t guarantee that the graffiti will be completely removed by chemical means. Additionally, since paint colors offered by the city are limited to four or five basic shades, homeowners may want to try painting out graffiti themselves.

» The MPD offers safety tips for walkers, runners and bikers online at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/runners>

» For more safety tips for you and your children, call (202) 234-9404 or see the DC action for Children website at:
<http://www.dckids.org>

» For more information on graffiti removal by the DPW, including the information you should provide for service and hours of operation, go to:
<http://dpw.dc.gov>

» To request graffiti removal on private property and/or to get a waiver form, contact the Mayor’s Citywide Call Center at **311**.

DATA BOX

Homicides	as of 3/25/11
2011: 20	
2010: 18	
% Change: 11%	
Closure Rate: 80% (16 closures)	
Adult Arrests	week end. 3/19/11
Total Arrests: 1,060	
Weapons: 17	
Robbery: 17	
Unauthorized Use of Vehicle: 13	
Prostitution/Sex Offenses: 33	
Narcotics: 221	
Juvenile Activity	week end. 3/19/11
Total Arrests: 82	
Weapons: 6	
Robbery: 7	
Unauthorized Use of Vehicle: 4	
Narcotics: 8	
Firearm Recoveries	as of 3/21/11
March: 95	
2011 Total: 409	
Traffic Fatalities	as of 3/25/11
2011: 11	
2010: 5	
% Change: 120%	

NEWS & NOTES

Also Noteworthy

Street Closures for National Marathon on 3/26. The SunTrust National Marathon and Half Marathon are scheduled

to be held on Saturday, March 26, 2011. Get details on the times and locations of the street closures at <http://mpdc.dc.gov>.

Preventing terrorism is everybody’s business. If you SEE something, SAY something. Call the Metropolitan Police

Department at (202) 727-9099 to report suspicious activity or behavior that has already occurred. Call 911 to report in-progress threats or emergencies. Learn more about steps you can take to help fight terrorism at <http://mpdc.dc.gov/operationTIPP>.

Information, ideas, or comments about this service?

Send an e-mail to **KAYLIN CASTELLI**, Manager of Internet Communications, at kaylin.castelli@dc.gov

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