

WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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



Friday, December 2, 2011

MPD OFFERS TIPS ON HOW TO STAY SAFE DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

With Thanksgiving and “Black Friday” behind us, the holiday season is finally here. This year, don’t let the spirit of giving lull you into giving burglars, muggers, and pickpockets a better chance to do their dirty work. Crooks love the holidays as much as everyone else, especially because it’s an opportune time for crime.

As you gear up for the holidays, the MPD offers the following tips on protecting yourself and your property. While shopping, stay alert and aware of what’s going on around you. Park in a well-lighted space, and be sure to lock the car, close the windows, and hide shopping bags and gifts in the trunk. Avoid carrying large amounts of cash; pay with a check or credit card whenever possible. To deter pickpockets and purse-snatchers, don’t overburden yourself with packages. Remember to be extra careful with purses and wallets during the holiday season – carry a purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps; put a wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket. If you’re shopping with kids, teach them to go to a store clerk or security guard if you get separated.

Loading up on all those gifts is a sign of progress in the holiday shopping. But if those packages are left out in the open after they’re in the car, your car has become a likely target for thieves. Remember the old cliché “Out of sight, out of mind?” The same idea applies to items in your car. Always lock your vehicle and store all items out of sight. Breaking into an empty car isn’t worth a thief’s time. However, anything left in plain view – from your holiday gifts to spare change, sunglasses, CDs, cell phones or briefcases – may tempt a thief. Help prevent your vehicle from being stolen by always locking your car and using anti-theft devices.

You also need to take precautions at home. Criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts. And it’s not uncommon for people to try to take advantage of others’ generosity during the holidays by going door-to-door for charitable donations when there’s no charity involved. Ask for identification, and find out how the funds will be used. If you aren’t satisfied, don’t give. Help a charitable organization you know and like instead.

If you are traveling, get an automatic timer for your lights; ask a neighbor to watch your home, shovel snow, and park in the driveway from time to time; and don’t forget to have mail and newspaper delivery stopped. If it piles up, it’s a sure sign you’re gone.

When you go out for the evening, remember to turn on lights and a radio or TV so it looks like someone’s home. Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave, even if it’s just for a few minutes. Also, don’t display gifts where they can be seen from outside.

Throughout the holiday season, please remember to celebrate responsibly. Drinking and driving is a danger to everyone on the road. Anyone with a BAC of .08 or higher is in violation of DC law and may go to jail. Remember that the risk isn’t worth it—if you choose to drink alcohol at a party, don’t drive. Take a cab, use public transportation or a designated driver, or call SoberRide® (800-200-TAXI), a free cab service in DC and the surrounding area active from December 16 through January 1. Have fun, but remember to celebrate responsibly.

- » Get more holiday safety tips at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/holidaysafety>
- » Theft and Pickpocket Prevention tips as well as a number of other safety brochures are available at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/safety>
- » Learn more about the penalties for drinking and driving in the District of Columbia at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/dui>
- » Get more information about the Washington Regional Alcohol Program’s Holiday SoberRide® Campaign at:
<http://www.wrap.org/soberide/index.htm>



MPD REMINDS IPHONE USERS TO PROTECT THEIR PROPERTY

The Apple iPhone remains one of the most popular smart phones on the market these days. It is impossible to walk down the street without seeing one in use. This ubiquitous, expensive device appeals to criminals because it can be easily reprogrammed, or erased, and quickly sold for cash.

Thieves are sometimes bold enough to snatch the phone right out of its owner's hand while he or she is using it. People have also had their phones taken from tables while sitting at restaurants. Although the vast majority of these offenses do not involve physical harm to the victim, it is still a disconcerting trend.

The MPD is reminding people to be aware of their surroundings, especially while walking down the street and talking on the phone. It is particularly important to be aware of your surroundings if you are walking alone at night. Do not leave your phone on a table while dining out, as this may also attract would-be thieves.

Cell phone users should also consider how to use their phones safely. Talking and texting on a cell phone may distract you from your surroundings, and it can become downright dangerous at intersections. Please, stop texting long enough to cross a street. While he may have the right-of-way, a walker doesn't stand a chance against a car.

As always, if you observe any suspicious activity, please call 911 immediately.

» The MPD offers a number of safety tips, including tips on guarding against robbery and assault and burglary prevention. Get these and other safety tips at:

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

» Get pedestrian safety tips at:

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

CONNECT WITH DC GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE DIGITAL PUBLIC SQUARE

DC's Digital Public Square is an online networking and information service with helpful links to DC government social media pages, data catalogs and more. The Digital Public Square offers free downloads of popular data sets like DC Index Crime Data from the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and live data feeds of crime incidents and arrests. Users can also create custom downloads through the Digital Public Square. Users can also create their own visualizations using DC datasets. Users can create and share a variety of data visualizations. The site provides links to some interactive graphs and charts created based on DC datasets. You can create your own visualization using already uploaded datasets or slice and dice data the way no one did before.

» Connect with DC through the Digital Public Square at:

<http://dps.dc.gov/>

» Visit MPD's website to get up-to-date information on homicides, arrests and firearm recoveries in DC, annual official crime statistics for recent years, or preliminary monthly statistics for the current year at:

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

NEWS & NOTES

Also Noteworthy

Join the MPD Reserve Corps. The MPD Reserve Corps, a volunteer policing program is seeking new members. Applications are now being accepted at <http://dcpolice.jobs>.

Report Crimes Against Children through the CyberTipline. The CyberTipline is a Congressionally-mandated means for reporting crimes against children. Report crimes 24-hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 1-800-843-5678 or reporting crimes online at <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

Preventing terrorism is everybody's business.

If you SEE something, SAY something. Call the MPD at (202) 727-9099 to report suspicious activity that has already occurred. Call 911 to report in-progress threats or emergencies. Learn how you can help fight terrorism at <http://mpdc.dc.gov/operationTIPP>.

MPD Celebrates 150 Years.

The Metropolitan Police Department turned 150 on August 6. Look for a special decal on most marked vehicles to highlight and celebrate this landmark in the agency's history. In addition, many of our uniformed officers have chosen to honor the sesquicentennial by wearing a commemorative badge through September 30, 2011.

In honor of the milestone, additional information about the Department's history is being added to our website, including the biographies of every Chief of Police since 1861, a history of the badge, and more each week. Special banners highlighting the anniversary are also being displayed at MPD Headquarters and other facilities.

To see the special section, visit www.mpdc.dc.gov/150th.



DATA BOX

Homicides as of 12/2/11

2011: 102

2010: 124

% Change: -17.7%

Closure Rate: 87.3% (92 closures)

Firearm Recoveries as of 11/28/11

November: 143

2011 Total: 1,758

Traffic Fatalities as of 12/2/11

2011: 31

2010: 20

% Change: 55%

Information, ideas, or comments about this service?

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

Would you like *What's New in the MPD* emailed to you each week?

Register with DC.Gov at <http://dc.gov/DC/Subscribe/Email+Alerts>

LEARN MORE AT

mpdc.dc.gov