

WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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



Friday, December 9, 2011

COPS HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING SET FOR DECEMBER 13

The holiday season is a wonderful time of year to celebrate with friends and family. It is also a time to remember those who are no longer with us. Over a decade ago, members of the Washington, DC Chapter of Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.) and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) gathered to plant a small blue spruce tree in front of MPD Headquarters. Barely more than a sapling, the tree was decorated with lights and ornaments made by the families and children of officers from the DC region who had been killed in the line of duty. An annual tradition was born.

Every year since then, DC-C.O.P.S. and the MPD have been honoring fallen officers at the annual Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony. This year, the short ceremony is set for Tuesday, December 13, 2011 at 7:00 PM. Students from the H.D. Woodson Choir will perform as part of the lighting ceremony. Members of the community are invited to attend.



» The Washington DC Chapter of Concerns of Police Survivors (DC-C.O.P.S.) provides resources to assist in the rebuilding of the lives of surviving families and affected co-workers of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty. Learn more about DC-C.O.P.S. at:
<http://www.dc-cops.org/>

CELEBRATE RESPONSIBLY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Despite recent reductions in fatalities, impaired driving remains one of America's deadliest social problems. On average someone is killed by a drunk driver every 45 minutes. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration 33,808 people died in traffic crashes in 2009 in the United States (latest figures available), including an estimated 10,839 people who were killed in drunk driving crashes involving a driver with an illegal BAC (.08 or greater). Most people don't intend to drive home drunk, but too many find themselves at the end of the night without a sober designated driver. Unfortunately, many of these drivers convince themselves and friends that they are able to drive with the comment, "I'm okay, I'm just buzzed." Whether you've had one drink or ten, if your blood alcohol concentration is over the limit, then you are breaking the law. The MPD reminds motorists that DC has tough drunk driving laws, including a Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) standard of .08, zero tolerance for youthful offenders, and penalties that include stiff fines, license revocation and the possibility of jail time, even for first offenders.

Metropolitan Police officers are out in force this holiday season, looking for impaired drivers, speeders and other aggressive or unsafe drivers. The MPD is also throwing its support behind both the designated driver and SoberRide programs this holiday season. Sponsored by the Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), SoberRide provides holiday revelers with free cab rides home (up to \$50) every evening from 10 pm to 6 am, from December 16 through January 1. Individuals may request a cab by calling (800) 200-TAXI (200-8294).

» Learn more about drunk driving laws in DC by going to:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/dui>

» More details on SoberRide are available at:
<http://www.wrap.org/soberride>

» President Obama proclaimed December National Impaired Driving Prevention Month. Read the complete White House Release at:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/30/presidential-proclamation-national-impaired-driving-prevention-month-201>

» Parents, educators, and community leaders who work with young people every day are our Nation's best advocates for responsible decision making. Learn more about how you can help at:
<http://www.theantidrug.com>

ENJOY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON SAFELY ON THE ROADS AND IN THE SHOPS

The holiday season is upon us! Houses and trees have been decorated with garland and lights, Christmas songs abound, and the shoppers are out in force. Special seasonal markets have cropped up in various parts of the city, and specialty boutiques and shopping centers are doing strong business. It may be tempting to rush from one store to another to catch the best sales and to get your shopping completed as quickly as possible, but it's important to take the time to remember your safety – and the safety of others – while you shop.

When walking along the busy streets of DC, 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.
- Keep alert! You may seem like an easy target to muggers and other crooks if you're loaded down with packages.

Drivers are also reminded to exercise caution and keep their cool while travelling from shop to shop in search of the perfect gift. Aggressive driving is described as a combination of unsafe and unlawful actions that demonstrate a conscious and willful disregard for safety, including offenses such as running red lights and stop signs; following too closely, or tailgating; changing lanes unsafely; failing to yield the right of way; improper passing; and speeding. Don't let your anger get the best of you if you're driving. During the holidays, be sure to allow extra travel time, because traffic congestion — and the related delays — is among the primary factors that lead motorists to drive aggressively. By leaving extra travel time, you will be less inclined to drive aggressively in order to make up for time lost in congestion.

Remember to signal your intentions, concentrate on your driving (not your cell phone, stereo, passengers, or other distractions), and extend common courtesy to other drivers at all times. Finally, keep everyone in your car safe by reminding them to wear their seatbelts. Drivers will be pulled over, ticketed, and fined for not obeying the seat belt laws. Penalties include the assessment points on your driver's license and fines ranging from \$50 to \$150 for offenses.

» The MPD offers safety tips for walkers, runners and bikers online at:

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

» This holiday season, 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. Learn more at:

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

» Aggressive driving will cost you. For more information on aggressive driving as well as the 10 basic rules of courtesy and safety, go to:

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

NEWS & NOTES

Also Noteworthy

Do you have an overdue DC Public Library book, CD or DVD? Check it in before February 5 and DC Public Library will forgive your fines. That's right! No fines, no fees, and no questions asked. The DC Public Library will forgive lost books as well. Regardless of how long you've had it and the condition it's in, check it in and discover

the joy of using DC Public Library again. For more information visit www.dclibrary.org/node/29020.

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>.

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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DATA BOX

Homicides as of 12/9/11

2011: 104

2010: 124

% Change: -16.1%

Closure Rate: 88.4% (92 closures)

Firearm Recoveries as of 12/5/11

December: 143

2011 Total: 1,774

Traffic Fatalities as of 12/9/11

2011: 31

2010: 20

% Change: 55%

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