

# WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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



*Friday, April 6, 2012*

## APRIL IS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

Sexual assault is any type of sexual activity that you do not agree to, including inappropriate touching, vaginal, anal, or oral penetration, sexual intercourse that you say no to, rape, attempted rape, and child molestation. Sexual assault can be verbal, visual, or anything that forces a person to join in unwanted sexual contact or attention. It is a reality for everyone. Anyone can be a victim regardless of gender, race, socio-economic status, or religion. Sexual assault victims include infants, elders, deaf and hearing impaired individuals, and members of the LGBT community, minorities, women, men, and disabled persons. No one is exempt. Above all, sexual assault is a crime! In light of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, the following tips are just a few risk reducers to being sexually assaulted:

- » **Listen to your instincts.** Normal premonition and “gut” feelings are natural indicators that something may be wrong. If you do not feel comfortable with a situation, leave.
- » **Be independent.** Most sexual assaults occur between acquaintances or people you already know. You don’t want to be dependent on someone for transportation to and from social outings and if dating someone you don’t need to feel as though you “owe” something because of things done for you during the courtship.
- » **Avoid mixing alcohol and drugs** with decisions about having sex. It is difficult to make important choices about sex if you are under the influence.
- » **Be aware of date rape drugs.** These drugs are often impossible to smell, taste, or detect in beverages. If you leave your drink alone with someone, do not drink it after you return. You can choose to have a trusted friend watch your drink as well.
- » **Consider going with a group** of people if you are meeting someone new.
- » **Communicate.** It is important to clearly talk about what each person in a relationship wants to do sexually. However, understand that NO means NO. Communication can be verbal as well as physical.
- » **Avoid dating people who...** don’t listen to you, don’t respect your personal space, make you feel guilty, or call you names (i.e., prude or uptight).
- » **Be assertive.** Make it clear that you are not going to do anything you don’t want to do and know that your date should stop once you have said or indicated NO.

A victim is never responsible for being sexually assaulted. You are not at fault, the perpetrator is. The aforementioned are risk reducers but know that making a poor choice or failing to use the risk reducers does NOT make it acceptable for anyone to sexual assault you.

- » If you have been a victim of a sexual assault, the MPD’s Victim Specialist Unit can provide you some much needed support. Get more information on this unit at:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/vsu>
- » Get more information about Sexual Assault Awareness Month at the National Sexual Violence Resource Center at:  
<http://www.nsvrc.org/saam>
- » Some helpful links to local resources include:
  - o RAINN: <http://www.rainn.org>
  - o DC Rape Crisis Center: <http://www.dcrcc.org>
  - o National Center for Victims of Crime: <http://www.ncvc.org>
  - o La Clinica Del Pueblo: <http://www.lcdp.org>



## BIKING IN DC: SAFETY GEAR AND REGISTERING YOUR BICYCLE

According to the National Safe Kids Campaign, motor vehicle collisions account for nearly 90 percent of all bicycle-related deaths. A collision with a motor vehicle increases the risk of death, severity of injury, and probability of head injury. Help protect your child against such accidents by making sure that he/she wears a helmet at all times while cycling. The District of Columbia has bicycle helmet laws to protect cyclists under the age of 16, who enjoy the many streets and trails in and around the Nation's Capital. Helmet laws are enforced for minors and encouraged for all adult cyclists, so please make sure you and your child wear a helmet at all times when riding a bike. In addition to mandating that riders under age 16 wear a helmet while riding a bicycle, the law also requires that children under the age of 16 wear a helmet when riding a scooter, skateboard, sled, coaster, toy vehicle, or any similar device.

Bicycle registration is no longer required in the District of Columbia. However, the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) strongly encourage residents to register their bicycles with the National Bicycle Registry (NBR). NBR is a service that allows you to register your bicycle by serial number in a national database. If your bike is ever stolen, it can be identified and you can prove ownership. Law enforcement anywhere can access this database. NBR also guarantees your registration. If your bike is stolen and not recovered by police within 6 months, NBR will register your next bike for free and the stolen bike information will remain in the database until the bike is recovered no matter how long it takes.

## POLICE RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM OFFERS COMMUNITY MEMBERS INSIGHT INTO THE DAILY OPERATIONS OF THE MPD

The MPD's Police Ride-Along program allows residents to accompany officers during their tour of duty in a police vehicle. "Ride-Along" means to be an official passenger in a patrol vehicle, accompanying a police officer during part of a normal tour of duty. The primary purpose of a police Ride-Along is to provide an opportunity for the community to see firsthand the day-to-day workings of law enforcement in the District of Columbia. The Ride-Along participant receives important insight into what it means to be a police officer. Criminal Justice students and individuals interested in law enforcement careers have found it particularly useful. The Ride-Along program fosters a better understanding of the challenges, hazards and rewards of the police officer's role in the community. Other Ride-Along goals are to: provide citizens the opportunity to get to know their police officers; offer citizens interested in a career in law enforcement an opportunity to examine the job; educate the community about the responsibilities of police officers; and provide an opportunity for police officers to get to know their community.

- » Remember to bike responsibly and pay attention to drivers and pedestrians who also may be out on the road or crossing the street. Check out the MPD's "Share the Road" safety tips for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians at: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/sharetheroad>
- » Read the MPD's frequently asked questions on registering your bike in the District of Columbia at: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/bikereg>
- » Get details on the bike helmet law in DC at: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/bikesafety>
- » DDOT is teaming up with WABA and Kidical Mass DC to teach the ABC's of Family Biking at a free event set for Saturday, April 21st from 11am – 2pm at Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan. Get more information at: <http://kidicalmassdc.blogspot.com/p/abcs-of-family-biking.html>

- » For additional contact information and to download an application to participate in the MPD's Police Ride-Along program, go to: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/ridealong>

DATA BOX	
<b>Homicides</b>	as of 4/6/12
2012: 18	
2011: 26	
% Change: -30.8%	
Closure Rate: 61.1% (11 closures)	
<b>Firearm Recoveries</b>	as of 4/2/12
April: 2	
2012 Total: 511	
<b>Traffic Fatalities</b>	as of 4/6/12
2012: 6	
2011: 12	
% Change: -50%	

### 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://dcpolicejobs.dc.gov>.

**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](mailto:kaylin.castelli@dc.gov)

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