

WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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



Friday, May 18, 2012

MPD REMINDS SMART PHONE USERS TO PROTECT THEIR PROPERTY

These days, it is impossible to walk down the street without seeing a smart phone in use. These ubiquitous, expensive devices appeal to criminals because they can be easily reprogrammed, or erased, and quickly sold for cash.

Thieves are sometimes bold enough to snatch a smart 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 you may technically have the right-of-way, as walker, you don't stand a chance against a car.

Here are some more tips for reducing your risk of becoming a victim of a robbery:

- » **Protect your Information.** Make sure your phone is password protected before you walk out the door. That way, if your device is lost or stolen, no one can run up your phone bill or access your online accounts.
- » **Don't Walk and Text.** Texting while walking is dangerous, especially in crosswalks and other areas with heavy pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Not only that, when you're texting, you're not paying attention to your surroundings, which make you an easy target for criminals.
- » **Pocket the Phone.** Consider putting your smart phone away for a bit. If you are wearing headphones, don't turn up the volume so high that you cannot hear outside noises. Don't forget that ubiquitous white cord may indicate to would-be thieves that you're carrying a certain brand of smart phone.
- » **Be Alert.** Always be aware of your surroundings. Wherever you are—on the street, in an office building or shopping mall, driving, waiting for a bus or subway—stay alert and tuned in to your surroundings.
- » **Safety in Numbers.** If possible, don't walk alone during late-night hours. Walk in groups whenever you can—there is always safety in numbers.
- » **Trust your instincts.** If something or someone makes you uneasy, avoid the person or leave.

If someone tries to rob you, don't resist. Give up your property—don't give up your life. Report the crime to the police. Try to describe the attacker accurately. Your actions can help prevent others from becoming victims.

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>



MPD OFFERS INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND YOUTH ON UNDERSTANDING AND AVOIDING GANGS

Joining a gang or crew can give you a sense of belonging and acceptance, but often being associated with one can lead to dangerous consequences. The MPD has developed a brochure that offers some ways to explore alternatives to gang membership and how to safely "leave" a gang if you're already involved. Some of these steps take time, but with dedication and the support of your family, you can change your life.

A gang is a group of individuals that band together for a common cause and are involved in criminal activity. Many gangs are highly organized and operate across state lines. A crew is a more loosely-knit group, often based on a neighborhood. These are usually individuals who grew up in or who have family roots in that neighborhood. Regardless of gang or crew affiliation, both groups are often associated with a variety of crimes, including narcotics trafficking, gun violations, assaults, and even homicides. Female gangs or crews are growing in DC as well. Gang violence is a community problem.

The MPD's webpage on gangs helps explain who joins these groups and why and provides signs of possible gang involvement. It also offers suggestions for what parents can do to protect their children and how young people can avoid getting involved.

CALL OR TEXT THE MPD'S ANONYMOUS CRIME TIP LINES

Concerned community members are encouraged to call 888-919-CRIME or text 50411 to anonymously provide crime information to the MPD.

The toll free crime tip line — 1-888-919-CRIME — is staffed by detectives 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Anyone who has information concerning a homicide, gangs, guns, or other violent offenses can call the anonymous tip line, and a detective will report all information. The toll-free number will also be displayed on L.E.D. boards in patrol cars throughout the District. This toll-free tip line is part of an ongoing effort to devise innovative ways to further reduce violence in the District, which has declined in recent years.

Additionally, community members can now use their cell phones to anonymously text tips to the Metropolitan Police Department.

Give 5-0 the 4-1-1 with the new Text Tip Line: 50411. Text messages are monitored by members of the department 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Tips are then analyzed and passed on to the appropriate unit or division for follow up. Because the tip line is anonymous, the sender will not receive a response to the original message.

Neither of these anonymous tips lines is an emergency number. If you witness a crime in progress or have an emergency that requires the police, please call 9-1-1.

» For more information and to download a printable version of the brochure, go to:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/gangs>

» Get more information on the MPD's anonymous crime tip lines at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/tipline>

- » Other important numbers include:
- MPD Gun Recovery Unit:
Gun Recovery Unit Task Force, 698-5662
 - 24-Hour Violent Crime Tip Line:
Crime Tip-line (888) 919-crime
 - 24-Hour Crime Tip Text Number:
Text: 50411
 - Emergency: 9-1-1
 - Mayor's Call Center: 3-1-1

DATA BOX

Homicides	as of 5/18/12
2012: 30	
2011: 40	
% Change: -25%	
Closure Rate: 73% (22 closures)	
Adult Arrests	(week end. 5/12/12)
Total Arrests: 901	
Weapons: 22	
Robbery: 12	
Unauthorized Use of Vehicle: 12	
Prostitution/Sex Offenses: 26	
Narcotics: 178	
Juvenile Activity	(week end. 5/12/12)
Total Arrests: 71	
Weapons: 2	
Robbery: 10	
Unauthorized Use of Vehicle: 3	
Narcotics: 7	
Firearm Recoveries	as of 5/14/12
May: 99	
2012 Total: 742	
Traffic Fatalities	as of 5/18/12
2012: 6	
2011: 14	
% Change: -57%	

NEWS & NOTES

Also Noteworthy

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>.

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>.

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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