

WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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



Friday, May 17, 2013

MAY IS MOTORCYCLE SAFETY AWARENESS MONTH

During "Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month," all motorists are reminded to safely share the road with motorcycles and to be extra alert when driving to help keep motorcyclists safe.

With warmer weather here, more motorcycles are back on the roads. Drivers of all vehicles need to be extra alert. Motorcycles are some of the smallest vehicles on the road, so folks in other vehicles need to really look out for them—and to take extra care to safely share the road. Because of their smaller size, motorcyclists are often hidden in a vehicle's blind spot. It's crucial that motorists and bicyclists always make a visual check for motorcycles by checking mirrors and blind spots before entering or leaving a lane of traffic and at intersections.

Motorcyclists are much more vulnerable than passenger vehicle drivers in the event of a crash. Research shows that approximately 80 percent of motorcycle crashes injure or kill a motorcycle rider, while 20 percent of passenger car crashes injure or kill a driver or passenger in their vehicle.

Drivers can follow these tips to help keep motorcyclists safe on our roadways:

- Remember the motorcycle is a vehicle with all of the rights and privileges of any other motor vehicle on the roadway. Always allow a motorcyclist the full lane width—never try to share a lane;
- Always make a visual check for motorcycles by checking mirrors and blind spots before entering or leaving a lane of traffic and at intersections;
- Always signal your intentions before changing lanes or merging with traffic;
- Don't be fooled by a flashing turn signal on a motorcycle – motorcycle signals are often not self-canceling and riders sometimes forget to turn them off. Wait to be sure the motorcycle is going to turn before you proceed;
- Remember that road conditions which are minor annoyances to other vehicles pose major hazards to motorcyclists;
- Allow more following distance, three or four seconds, when following a motorcycle, so the motorcyclist has enough time to maneuver or stop in an emergency. And don't tailgate. In dry conditions, motorcycles can stop more quickly than cars.

Motorcyclists have responsibilities, too, by following the rules of the road, being alert to other drivers, and always wearing DOT-compliant helmets and protective gear.

The message to all drivers is: make this the first year in recent years when motorcycle fatalities do not increase. Help to share in the responsibility and do your part by safely sharing the road with motorcycles.

» Get more information on motorcycle safety at:

- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:
<http://www.nhtsa.gov/Safety/Motorcycles>
- Motorcycle Safety Foundation:
<http://www.msf-usa.org/>

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.
- Pick your pump with care. 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>

NEWS & NOTES

Also Noteworthy

Tell Us How We're Doing. MPD is now part of Grade DC. We invite you to share your thoughts on our service – positive or negative – through MPD's email groups, our social media, or by visiting the Grade DC website. Get

more information at <http://grade.dc.gov>.

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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