

# WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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



Friday, June 28, 2013

## ENSURING A SAFE 4TH OF JULY CELEBRATION MEANS KNOWING THE LAW ON FIREWORKS IN DC

July 4th is traditionally a time for parades, backyard barbecues and the spectacular fireworks display on the National Mall. Unfortunately, the Independence Day holiday is also a time when serious injuries associated with illegal fireworks are all too common. Nationwide, nearly 10,000 people a year are treated in hospital emergency rooms for fireworks-related injuries; more than 40 percent of the victims are ages 14 and younger. So again this year, the MPD is joining with other public safety organizations in advising the public to know the law on fireworks in DC. District law prohibits all firecrackers, as well as any fireworks that explode

### Characteristics of *Illegal* Fireworks

An illegal firework as defined in Article 27 of the DC Official Code may have any of the following traits:

- It moves;
- It explodes;
- It emits a spark or flame greater than 12 feet;
- It has a side-mounted fuse or a fuse inserted at any point along the length of the product's surface;
- It contains mercury, arsenic, magnesium, phosphorus, or any other highly-oxidizing agent;
- The Fire Marshal considers it to be dangerous to the safety of any person or property.

(including cherry bombs, salutes, Roman candles, floral shells, and artillery shells) and any fireworks that launch after being lit (such as bottle rockets, parachutes, buzz-bombs, pinwheels, helicopters, and jumping jacks). Fireworks that have a side fuse or that contain mercury, arsenic or other dangerous materials are also prohibited. Among the fireworks that are allowed in the District are small sparklers, fountains, torches and other novelty items.



» For detailed information on fireworks laws in DC, as well as useful links to fireworks safety tips, click on:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/fireworks>

## THE MPD HARBOR PATROL STRESSES SAFETY ON INDEPENDENCE DAY AND THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER

This weekend, many captains and their crews will hit local waters for a little fun in the sun – and on the water – to celebrate Independence Day. The MPD's Harbor Patrol Unit is reminding boaters to respect the water and to practice important safety measures. In particular, boaters are being warned that boating while under the influence is strictly prohibited on DC's waterways. Harbor Patrol officers will be out this holiday weekend – and throughout the summer – looking for impaired boaters and other safety violations. Boat owners and guests are also reminded of the critical importance of personal flotation devices – or "PFDs," for short. US Coast Guard regulations require that all boats have a wearable type PFD for each person on board or being towed. Each PFD must be in good condition, readily available, and the proper size for the intended wearer. Boaters need to ensure that there are properly fitting PFDs for all children who may be aboard their vessels. In addition, boats 16 feet in length or longer must carry a Type IV throwable device. Most adults need an extra 7-12 pounds of buoyancy to keep their heads above water. A PFD can provide that "extra lift" to keep you afloat until help comes. Your weight isn't the only factor in how much extra lift you need. A person's body fat, lung size, clothing, and water conditions are also important.

» For more information about PFDs and their use and care, as well as other safety and equipment requirements, visit:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/harborpatrol>

» The Harbor Patrol offers boating safety courses that are required of anyone who operates a boat in DC. Get the 2013 schedule at:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/boatingsafety>

» Harbor Patrol wants you to have a safe and fun boating season. Wear a lifejacket, boat sober, and use common sense. Watch the Harbor Patrol PSAs at:  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3VJpj\\_Fg5BA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3VJpj_Fg5BA)

## BEAT THE HEAT, BUT LEAVE FIRE HYDRANTS ALONE

As summer heats up, DC Fire and EMS and DC Water remind District residents not to open fire hydrants—this is a dangerous practice. The water is highly pressurized and the force of it coming out of the hydrant can cause injury.

Turning on hydrants without the proper tools can damage the hydrant, its nozzle, and even the underground pipes in the water distribution system. Additionally, there is a significant danger especially to children, who can be knocked over from the force of the water or endangered from traffic when their water play is in the street.

Further, the high volume of water on roadways can wreak havoc with traffic. Open hydrants can also cause a drop in water pressure, affecting homes and businesses on the street, and impeding firefighting.

In addition to the potential for injury, opening hydrants can seriously affect the ability of the DC Fire Department to fight fires. If you have a heat emergency call 911, otherwise keep cool by staying in shade or air-conditioning and drinking plenty of fluids, preferably water. When temperatures or the heat index reach 95, residents are encouraged to seek refuge at a District swimming pool, cooling center, recreation facility or other air-conditioned building.

- » Tampering with a District hydrant is a crime. To report unauthorized use of fire hydrants, please call DC Water's 24-hour Emergency Center at **(202) 612-3400**.
- » Information about cooling centers and swimming pools, including their locations, can be found by calling 311 or visiting: <http://www.dc.gov>
- » The DC Department of Health offers healthy heat tips at: <http://doh.dc.gov>
- » Read the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC's) safety guide for dealing with extreme heat at: [http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat\\_guide.asp](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat_guide.asp)

## REMINDER TO YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES: CURFEW IN EFFECT YEAR-ROUND; SUMMER HOURS BEGIN JULY 1

The MPD offers this reminder to young people and their families concerning DC's teen curfew: From September 1 through June 30, DC's curfew for young people under the age of 17 starts at 11 pm, Sunday through Thursday nights, and at 12:01 am on weekends. Beginning Sunday, July 1, and continuing through August 31, DC's curfew starts at 12:01 am, and continues until 6 am seven days a week. This is an hour later than the weeknight curfew during school months. Under DC law, persons under the age of 17 cannot remain in or on a street, park or other outdoor public place, in a vehicle or on the premises of any establishment within the District during curfew hours, unless they are involved in certain exempted activities. These include work, school, religious, civic or organized recreational activities, as well as the exercise of First Amendment rights. DC's curfew law applies to all young people who are in the District during curfew hours, regardless of whether they live inside or outside the city. During the first six months of 2012, the MPD has processed approximately 1,800 curfew violators.

- » For complete details on DC's curfew law, including sample exemptions and alternative resources for young people, go to: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/curfew>

### 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>.

**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>.

**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>.

**Support the Washington DC Police Foundation.** The Washington DC Police

Foundation is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization that brings together the business, civic, and other professional communities to promote public safety by providing financial and in-kind resources to the MPD, expanding public safety awareness, and advancing public safety policy and initiatives. Learn more about the extraordinary support the Washington DC Police Foundation provides to the MPD. Learn more about the Foundation at <http://www.dcpolicefoundation.org>.

#### 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)

#### 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**