

WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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



Friday, February, 21, 2014

MPD REMINDS PUBLIC TO BE AWARE OF THE POLICE IMPERSONATOR PHONE SCAM

The Metropolitan Police Department would like to inform the public about a consumer scam that is becoming more common. Consumers should be ever vigilant and always question why. Businesses and law enforcement agencies won't mind and actually appreciate when consumer's question the legitimacy of correspondence or bills. So for your own protection consumers should scrutinize anything that is asking for or offering something.

Several complaints received were from out-of-state residents claiming that law enforcement personnel (calling from a 202 area code) have contacted them under the ruse of collecting money for outstanding bills, tickets or loans. In some instances, the suspect has even represented themselves as a detective with the Financial Crime Unit of The Metropolitan Police Department or as an IRS Agent.

In these cases the scammer uses a law enforcement angle to attempt to add legitimacy and urgency to the hoax by threatening arrest or prosecution. These scams always ask for money to be wired via Western Union, MoneyGram, or Greendot "MoneyPaks", in order for one to avoid prosecution. Often times they use the actual names of government or law enforcement personnel to enhance the credibility of the scam.

Scammers are increasingly using "Magic Jack" or VOIP (Voice over Internet Protocol). Magic Jack and VOIP are simply making phone calls thru a computer network. With this technology it is easy to make phone calls or conduct scams that appear to be local but are not. In these cases, the scammer can obtain a DC area code (or any area code) yet they are physically located overseas. Since the money is almost always transferred overseas, law enforcement officials are unable to investigate the crime and the wire service is unable to reimburse the funds.

Law enforcement agencies will not attempt to collect fines or outstanding debt from citizens. Furthermore, the IRS does not initiate contact with taxpayers via phone calls or email. Anytime that someone you don't personally know asks for any type of wire transfer, there is a 99% chance IT IS A SCAM. Citizens should also be reminded to never give out their personal information in response to an unsolicited phone call or email.

The Metropolitan Police Department takes all scams seriously. If you believe that you've been targeted by this type of scam, please contact the Financial Crime and Fraud Unit at 202-727-4159 or mpd.fraud-unit@dc.gov. Additionally, anonymous information may be submitted to the department's TEXT TIP LINE by text messaging 50411. Also, if you are contacted by a DC Government phone number, you should hang up and call 311 and ask to be connected to 202-727-4159.

STOLEN BICYCLE OR CELL PHONE? CHECK OUT ONLINE PHOTOS OF PROPERTY RECOVERED BY MPD

Every year, the Metropolitan Police Department recovers hundreds of stolen and abandoned bicycles, and hundreds of lost and found electronic devices. This property is inventoried by the MPD's Evidence Control Branch. Property not claimed within 90 days of recovery is considered abandoned. The MPD will advertise this property as abandoned and may dispose of any property not claimed within the designated timeframe. Recovered property not claimed may be auctioned through www.govdeals.com or donated. Before any recovered bicycles are auctioned or donated, images will be posted online.

Any person or entity having a right of claim to any item of property pictured online must appear in person to the Evidence Control Branch. To claim property pictured via one of the links above, individuals must provide the MPD's Evidence Control Branch with government identification; a bar code included with the image; and proof of ownership of property OR documentation that a police report (CCN) was filed.



» Photos are uploaded to Flickr accounts on a regular basis. For links to these sites, go to: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/recover>

» All recovered property is managed by the Evidence Control Branch. Members of the ECB may be contacted at:
17 DC Village Lane, SW
Washington, DC 20032
(202) 727-3230

MPD OFFERS REMINDERS ABOUT PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

The Metropolitan Police Department would like to remind everyone to be aware of their surroundings to ensure the safe travels of other drivers and pedestrians on our city streets. Drivers are reminded to be vigilant in looking out for pedestrians. When walking or exercising, especially in the early morning or at dusk or dark, 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.
- Exercising outdoors at dusk or at night can be dangerous without some type of reflective device on your clothing. Many athletic shoes have reflective qualities built in, but also consider a vest complete with reflective tape.
- Keep alert! Dawn and dusk offer convenient shadows for muggers and other crooks
- Runners are also reminded to ALWAYS carry identification with them when they go out.

» The MPD offers safety tips for walkers, runners and bikers online at: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/runners>

» If carrying a license seems too inconvenient, please consider purchasing an identification bracelet or tag for your shoe. New products designed especially for runners, bikers and other athletes have recently come on the market. A simple internet search for "identification bracelet" will provide numerous results.

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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