

WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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



Friday, October 10, 2014

SHARE THE ROAD: TIPS FOR DRIVERS, CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS

On average, 265 bicycle and 600 pedestrian crashes are reported to the Metropolitan Police Department each year in the District of Columbia. Approximately 2,700 pedestrians and bicyclists are injured every year in the Washington region, and 89 are killed. What's disappointing is that many of these fatalities could have been avoided. By exercising some common sense and extending some common courtesies, future tragedies can be avoided. The following tips should help drivers, bikers and walkers share the road and get where they're going safely.

Tips for Drivers

Drivers are reminded to turn on vehicle headlights at dusk and be vigilant in looking out for cyclists and pedestrians. Additionally, drivers should:

- Stop for pedestrians at crosswalks.
- Slow down and obey the posted speed limit.
- Yield to pedestrians and cyclists when turning.
- Look before opening your door.
- Be careful when passing stopped vehicles.
- Allow three feet when passing bicyclists.

Tips for Cyclists

When travelling on city streets, cyclists should follow the same rules of the road as motorized vehicles. This means stopping at stop signs; obeying traffic signals and lane markings; and using hand signals to let others know your intention to stop or turn. Furthermore, cyclists are advised to be aware of their surroundings:

- Don't wear headphones; you need to be able to hear if a car is approaching.
- Slow down and check for oncoming traffic before entering any street or intersection
- Do your best to anticipate hazards and adjust your position in traffic accordingly.
- Be predictable: ride with the flow of traffic, on the right, and in a straight line – not in and out of parked cars on the side of the street.

Be visible and wear the proper protective gear. DC law mandates that riders under 16 are required to wear a helmet while cycling in the District of Columbia, but it's a good idea for bikers of any age. Make eye contact with motorists to let them know you are there (but don't always expect them to see you). And stay visible by riding where drivers are looking (i.e., do not pass on the right). Bicyclist should be particularly mindful of their visibility to other vehicles in the evening, especially when biking during rush hour or later. Legally, cyclists must have a front white light and a red rear reflector and/or a rear red light.

Tips for Walkers and Runners

Whether you're going for an afternoon stroll, commuting to work on foot, or getting some exercise, walking and running are great activities. However, it's important to pay attention. 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.

» Get tips for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians, and learn how to avoid fines for associated violations at:

<http://mpdc.dc.gov/sharetheroad>

» Tips for drivers, bikers and pedestrians are available on the Street Smart website:

<http://www.beststreetsmart.net>

» Get cycling tips and hand signals from the Street Smart Campaign:

<http://www.beststreetsmart.net/bike.php>

» Get more walking and running tips from the MPD at:

<http://mpdc.dc.gov/runners>

» Aggressive driving is a combination of unsafe and unlawful actions that demonstrate a conscious and willful disregard for safety. If you witness aggressive driving, report it. Learn more about aggressive driving at:

<http://mpdc.dc.gov/smoothoperator>

- 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.

Pedestrians and cyclists are also reminded to ALWAYS carry identification with them when they go out. 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.

USE THE HSEMA MOBILE APP FOR INFORMATION IN AN EMERGENCY OR DISASTER

No one is ever ready for an emergency but you can be prepared. When you know where to get information, have the right supplies, and have a plan for you, your loved ones, and your pets, you can protect yourself and your family before a crisis and for at least 72 hours afterwards.

The Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA) iPhone/iPad/Android application contains important information you can use before, during and after an emergency or disaster such as:

- Emergency evacuation routes that lead you out of the District
- Alert DC emergency text alerts
- Current weather outlooks from the National Weather Service
- Disaster safety tips
- Help lines that provide telephone numbers to essential emergency resources and information
- A calendar informing the public about emergency preparedness training, HSEMA Community Outreach events as well as special events such as marathons and street festivals
- A direct link to the local transit authority’s (METRO) main website and twitter page
- List of shelters that are opened after a disaster occurs
- A direct link to FEMA’s website,
- Maps of where District Police and Fire stations are located
- Regional preparedness links
- Steps to take to make a family emergency plan, a go kit, and much more!

The tools in this app help ensure that no matter where you are or what you are doing you’ll be prepared.

- » Learn more about the safety, information and mapping data that’s available on DC HSEMA’s Mobile Application at: <http://hsema.dc.gov/page/homeland-security-and-emergency-management-agency-mobile-app>
- » The app is free to download through the GooglePlay Store and the Apple App Store.



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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