

WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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



Friday, June 5, 2015

PREPARE FOR YOUR SUMMER BICYCLE RIDES BY GETTING THE APPROPRIATE SAFETY GEAR AND REGISTERING YOUR BIKE

According to the National Safe Kids Campaign, motor vehicle collisions account for nearly 90 percent of all bicycle-related deaths. A collision with a motor vehicle increases the risk of death, severity of injury, and probability of head injury. Help protect your child against such accidents by making sure that he/she wears a helmet at all times while cycling. The District of Columbia has bicycle helmet laws to protect cyclists under the age of



16, who enjoy the many streets and trails in and around the Nation's Capital. Helmet laws are enforced for minors and encouraged for all adult cyclists, so please make sure you and your child wear a helmet at all times when riding a bike. In addition to mandating that riders under age 16 wear a helmet while riding a bicycle, the law also requires that children under the age of 16 wear a helmet when riding a scooter, skateboard, sled, coaster, toy vehicle, or any similar device.

Bicycle registration is no longer required in the District of Columbia. However, the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) strongly encourage residents to register their bicycles with the National Bicycle Registry (NBR). NBR is a service that allows you to register your bicycle by serial number in a national database. If your bike is ever stolen, it can be identified and you can prove ownership. Law enforcement anywhere can access this database. NBR also guarantees your registration. If your bike is stolen and not recovered by police within 6 months, NBR will register your next bike for free and the stolen bike information will remain in the database until the bike is recovered no matter how long it takes.

SMARTPHONE USERS ENCOURAGED TO TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT THEFT AND TO BRICK STOLEN DEVICES

In Washington, DC, New York and other large American cities, roughly 40% of all robberies now involve smart phones—endangering the physical safety of victims, as well as the security of the personal information on the stolen devices. In addition to the loss and injury experienced during the initial crime, there is an added risk of identity theft if the stolen smartphone isn't password protected to prevent a thief from getting access to private information on the device.

Smartphone owners are encouraged to do what they can to reduce their risk of becoming a victim of a robbery. The MPD offers the following tips:

- » Remember to bike responsibly and pay attention to drivers and pedestrians who also may be out on the road or crossing the street. Check out the MPD's "Share the Road" safety tips for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians at: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/sharetheroad>
- » Read the MPD's frequently asked questions on registering your bike in the District of Columbia at: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/bikereg>
- » Get details on the bike helmet law in DC at: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/bikesafety>

- **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 smartphone 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.



- » The MPD offers a variety of safety tips, including a complete brochure on robbery prevention. Read the tips online or download brochures at: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/safety>
- » Get more information on “bricking” your phone at: <http://brickit.dc.gov>
- » The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) offers information on how to safeguard yourself against wireless device theft at: <http://www.fcc.gov/guides/stolen-and-lost-wireless-devices>
- » If your smart phone is lost or stolen, contact your carrier. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has a contact list of service providers at: <http://www.fcc.gov/stolen-phones-contact-numbers>

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.

If your smart phone is lost or stolen, you may now contact the carrier and ask to have that device remotely disabled. If a smart phone is rendered inactive in such a manner, it's often considered to be as useful as a “brick.” These “bricked” phones are of little use to thieves because they can't be reactivated after being sold on the black market. The MPD is encouraging victims of smart phone thefts to call their carriers and to “brick it” in an effort to deter smart phone theft.

By bricking your phone, you will permanently disable your device and help us eliminate the black market for stolen smart phones. We can reduce robberies by eliminating the reason criminals steal smart phones in the first place!

NEWS & NOTES

Also Noteworthy

DPW Truck Touch Set for 6/6. Join DPW and members of the MPD for the 8th annual “Truck Touch” on Saturday, June 6, from 8 am to 1 pm at RFK Stadium, Lot 1. Get more information at <http://dpw.dc.gov/page/truck-touch-2015>.

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>.

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>.

Information, ideas, or comments about this service?

Send an e-mail to **KAYLIN CASTELLI**, Manager of Internet Communications, at 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