WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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

Friday, July 24, 2015

DC PREPARES FOR NATIONAL NIGHT OUT ON AUGUST 4

On Tuesday, August 4, thousands of DC residents are expected to join with their neighbors, police officers and other community leaders in celebrating National Night Out (NNO). From community cookouts to open houses – block parties, candlelight vigils and athletic events – DC is gearing up for the 32nd annual celebration of "America's Night Out Against Crime." The citywide kickoff will begin at 5 pm at the Takoma Recreation Center, 300 Van Buren Street, NW, in the Fourth District. Public safety characters McGruff the Crime Dog® and the National Knight® will be available to meet attendees and have their photos taken. In addition to the numerous activities taking place at the kickoff event, communities across DC – in all seven police districts – have scheduled NNO events during the late afternoon and evening hours.

National Night Out is an annual event, sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch, that takes place on the first Tuesday in August. Each year, the Metropolitan Police Department actively participates in National Night Out by rallying community members throughout the District of Columbia to join with neighbors and police officers in their PSAs to be a part of this annual event.

The National Night Out campaign involves citizens, law enforcement agencies, civic groups, businesses, neighborhood organizations and local officials from 9,500 communities from all 50 states, US territories, Canadian cities and military bases worldwide.

» For complete list of events scheduled to take place in the seven police districts and other information about National Night Out in DC, go to: http://mpdc.dc.gov/NNO

» Even if you can't participate in an organized National Night Out event, you can still be involved. Residents are encouraged to turn on their exterior lights on the evening of August 4 ¬— as a show of neighborhood solidarity against crime. Learn more about NNO at: http://www.nno.org

MPD MISSING PERSONS GUIDE OFFERS TIPS FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

To support parents and guardians, the MPD has a comprehensive Missing Persons Guide. The online guide provides helpful advice and resources for parents and guardians whose children are missing. The guide stresses that the first 48 hours following a missing person or runaway episode are the most important in locating a child. While many runaway children return home – or, in the case of missing children, are located – during this period, it is critical to take every action available to help locate and safeguard our children. Parents are reminded not wait 48 hours to report your child missing. There is no time limit that you must wait to report a person as missing, whether he or she is considered missing or a runaway. And, contrary to some commonly held beliefs, police do not wait a designated period of time (such as 24 or 48 hours) to begin investigating a missing person report. The Missing Persons Guide includes instructions on what to do immediately if you believe your child is missing. The online guide also includes information on what preparations to take ahead of time, which will assist investigators if your child does become missing. It also includes valuable telephone numbers and other resources.

» The MPD's Missing Persons Guide is available online at: http://mpdc.dc.gov/missing

» The CyberTipline is a Congressionally-mandated means of reporting crimes against children. Learn more or report a crime at: http://cybertipline.com

» The National Center for Missing & Exploited children provides a wealth of information about protecting your children and finding missing kids. Get more details at: http://www.missingkids.com

MPD REMINDS SMART PHONE USERS TO PROTECT THEIR PROPERTY

These days, it is impossible to walk down the street without seeing a smart phone in use. These ubiquitous, expensive devices appeal to criminals because they can be easily reprogrammed, or erased, and quickly sold for cash.

Thieves are sometimes bold enough to snatch a smart phone right out of its owner's hand while he or she is using it. People have also had their phones taken from tables while sitting at restaurants. Although the vast majority of these offenses do not involve physical harm to the victim, it is still a disconcerting trend.

The MPD is reminding people to be aware of their surroundings, especially while walking down the street and talking on the phone. It is particularly important to be aware of your surroundings if you are walking alone at night. Do not leave your phone on a table while dining out, as this may also attract would-be thieves.

Cell phone users should also consider how to use their phones safely. Talking and texting on a cell phone may distract you from your surroundings, and it can become downright dangerous at intersections. Please, stop texting long enough to cross a street. While you may technically have the right-of-way, as walker, you don't stand a chance against a car.

Here are some more tips for reducing your risk of becoming a victim of a robbery:

- **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 smart phone 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.

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.

As always, if you observe any suspicious activity, please call 911 immediately.

» The MPD offers a number of safety tips, including tips on guarding against robbery and assault and burglary prevention. Get these and other safety tips at: http://mpdc.dc.gov/safety

» Brick it! By bricking your phone, you will permanently disable your device and help us eliminate the black market for stolen smart phones. Learn more at: http://mpdc.dc.gov/brickit

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.**

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

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