

WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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



Friday, November 27, 2015

REDUCE THE RISK OF BURGLARY BY SECURING THE EXTERIOR OF YOUR HOME

Burglars can strike at almost any time and on almost any target. But burglars particularly like targets that look vulnerable. So if you plan to travel during the holidays, make sure you take a few minutes to plan how to help keep your home and your possessions secure while you're away. The primary goal is to make your home look "lived in" (almost all burglars prefer homes where residents clearly aren't home). That means arranging to have your newspaper deliveries stopped and your mail collected by a trusted neighbor. It's probably best not to put your garbage cans out for pickup—or, alternatively, arrange to have a neighbor take in your can after the collection date. Empty trash cans left at the curb or in an alley for several days can be a sure-fire sign that no one is home. Inside, set timers to turn on lights—as well as radio or television sets—in various rooms at various times of the day. And don't change your voice mail message or your email reply to indicate that you are "out of town."



As the holiday season approaches many residents will be purchasing or receiving electronics as gifts. These are the types of items most commonly stolen during burglaries. It is recommended that you record the brand, model, and serial number of all electronic items and other valuables and store them in a safe location. If your house is burglarized, this information can be very helpful in recovering stolen property and arresting the persons responsible for the burglaries.

WATCH OUT FOR CHARITY SCAMS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

The holiday season is traditionally a time of giving, with many charities seeking contributions to help the less fortunate. But it can also be a time when some con artists try to take advantage of other peoples' generosity by going door-to-door for "charitable donations" — when there is really no charity involved. If someone shows up at your door asking for donations, always ask for identification and look at it carefully. It's also a good idea to request printed information about the charity, or a phone number or website that you can contact for more information. Also, find out how the funds will be used. Be especially wary of people who ask for cash only or of children out soliciting funds who are not accompanied by an adult. If

you are not satisfied with the answers you get, there is a simple solution: don't give — at least not right away, until you have had a chance to do your research. As an alternative, help a charitable organization you are familiar with.



Image: Michal Marcol / FreeDigitalPhotos.net

- » Becoming a victim of a theft or burglary can really put a damper on your holiday festivities. The MPD offers tips that are helpful to review during in the holiday season. Learn more at: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/node/199972>

- » For more information on charity and other scams, visit: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/scams>
- » Charity scams are just one type of crime that can happen during the holidays. For a list of winter holiday safety tips for shoppers, travelers and when you're at home, check out: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/holidaysafety>

TAKE STEPS TO KEEP YOUR VALUABLES SAFE WHEN PARKING IN POPULAR NIGHTSPOTS, SHOPPING AREAS

One of the most common types of theft is theft of valuables from your automobile. Theft from auto is strictly a crime of opportunity that can be prevented if you take away the opportunity. Thieves generally won't waste their time breaking into autos that don't have valuables in plain sight.

Thefts from autos can be a recurring problem in the District because of the prevalence of fashionable stores, popular restaurants, and trendy bars. Visitors to these establishments can become the unwitting target of these crimes of opportunity. Cars parked near sporting venues when games or concerts are scheduled may also be targeted. If you plan on parking your car in a neighborhood that is known for its numerous visitors, remember thieves know these areas are popular, too. Be sure to either take valuable property with you or secure it properly. Please take the precautions listed below to help ensure your auto is not targeted by thieves:

- **Keep Your Valuables Out of Sight.** The best way to prevent theft from your auto is to always keep valuables out of sight. Never leave cell phones, briefcases, suitcases, or electronic devices (cell phones, iPods, laptop computers, etc.) in your car in plain view. Take these items with you, or secure them—all the time, every time.
- **Secure Your GPS Device.** While many GPS devices are mounted in the dashboard of the vehicle, the MPD encourages anyone who uses a portable GPS device to take it with you, along with any other items of value, when you park the car.
- **Use Your Trunk.** If your car has a trunk, use it. Put valuables in there or in a locked glove compartment. Hiding items under seats is better than leaving them in plain view, but securing them inside the glove compartment or trunk is a far better deterrent.
- **Don't Tempt Thieves with New Purchases.** Any time you're shopping, place packages in the trunk, not on the passenger seats or floors.
- **Lock It Up.** Also, keep your car doors and windows locked—all the time!

Remember: "Outta sight, outta mind"—if thieves can't see your valuables, they're less likely to waste their time targeting your auto. Take the time to secure your valuables; it makes a difference.

» See these tips and more online at:

<http://mpdc.dc.gov/page/auto-theft-prevention>

» Take precautions when pumping gas. Learn steps you can take in a brief video on our YouTube channel at:

<http://youtu.be/H4r2v3MhU-s>

» Download a brochure on "Protecting Your Vehicle from Theft and Tampering" at:

http://mpdc.dc.gov/protectingyourvehicle_pdf

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>.

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

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