

WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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



Friday, December 11, 2015

ENJOY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON SAFETY ON THE ROADS AND IN THE SHOPS

The holiday season is upon us! Houses and trees have been decorated with garland and lights, Christmas songs abound, and the shoppers are out in force. Special seasonal markets have cropped up in various parts of the city, and specialty boutiques and shopping centers are doing strong business. It may be tempting to rush from one store to another to catch the best sales and to get your shopping completed as quickly as possible, but it's important to take the time to remember your safety – and the safety of others – while you shop.

When walking along the busy streets of DC, 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.
- Keep alert! You may seem like an easy target to muggers and other crooks if you're loaded down with packages.

Drivers are also reminded to exercise caution and keep their cool while travelling from shop to shop in search of the perfect gift. Aggressive driving is described as a combination of unsafe and unlawful actions that demonstrate a conscious and willful disregard for safety, including offenses such as running red lights and stop signs; following too closely, or tailgating; changing lanes unsafely; failing to yield the right of way; improper passing; and speeding. Don't let your anger get the best of you if you're driving. During the holidays, be sure to allow extra travel time, because traffic congestion — and the related delays — is among the primary factors that lead motorists to drive aggressively. By leaving extra travel time, you will be less inclined to drive aggressively in order to make up for time lost in congestion.

Remember to signal your intentions, concentrate on your driving (not your cell phone, stereo, passengers, or other distractions), and extend common courtesy to other drivers at all times. Finally, keep everyone in your car safe by reminding them to wear their seatbelts. Drivers will be pulled over, ticketed, and fined for not obeying the seat belt laws. Penalties include the assessment points on your driver's license and fines ranging from \$50 to \$150 for offenses.

WATCH YOUR MONEY AT THE ATM: USE SAFETY TIPS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF SKIMMING FRAUD DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

The potential risk of fraud often increases during the holiday season upon. One common scam is to use a skimming device on an ATM. Targeted machines are often located in convenience stores. Skimming fraud has been reported across the nation, including ATMS in the District of Columbia and Baltimore metropolitan areas.

» The MPD offers safety tips for walkers, runners and bikers online at:

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

» This holiday season, don't let the spirit of giving lull you into giving burglars, muggers, and pickpockets a better chance to do their dirty work. Crooks love the holidays as much as everyone else, especially because it's an opportune time for crime. Learn more at:

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

» Aggressive driving will cost you. For more information on aggressive driving as well as the 10 basic rules of courtesy and safety, go to:

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

What is ATM Skimming?

ATM Skimming involves the attachment of electronic devices on or around the ATM for the purposes of capturing both the magnetic strip data contained on the back of a debit card as well as the PIN number that is entered by the customer when using the ATM. The devices used to capture the information will vary in shapes, sizes and designs but are made to be unobtrusive or mimic legitimate devices.

ATM Safe Use Tips

- Regularly monitor your account activity using online banking.
- Avoid suspicious or unfamiliar ATMs.
- When approaching an ATM, check for obvious signs of tampering in the areas of the card slot or PIN pad.
- If you see anything suspicious or unusual, note the location and report it to the financial institution and law enforcement.

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're traveling this holiday season, 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."

In some of the burglaries a suspect might use a trash can remove stolen property and transport it to other locations. If you see someone you don't recognize pushing a trash can through an alley, please call 911, so an officer can respond and investigate the matter.

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.

» 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>

» If anyone has any information about any of the burglaries in the Sixth District – or any crimes in DC – they are encouraged to contact MPD at (202) 727-9099 or send an anonymous TEXT TIP to 50411.

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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