

# WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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



*Friday, January 14, 2011*

## AMBER ALERTS NOW AVAILABLE THROUGH FACEBOOK

On January 12, 2011, the Office of Justice Programs, joined representatives of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) and Facebook as they announced a partnership to enable 140 million Facebook users across the country to receive AMBER Alerts via their accounts. The announcement was made the day before the 15th anniversary of the abduction and murder of 9-year-old Amber Hagerman, namesake of the national AMBER Alert Program.

In 1996, Hagerman went missing while riding her bicycle in Arlington, Texas. A neighbor heard her scream and saw a man pull her off her bike throw her into the front seat of his pickup truck and drive away. Local radio and television stations covered the story. However, four days later Amber's body was found in a drainage ditch four miles away. Although her case has never been solved, her abduction and murder lead to the creation of the national AMBER Alert Program. AMBER stands for: America's Missing Broadcast Emergency Response.

An estimated 800,000 children are reported missing every year. AMBER Alert is a voluntary partnership involving law-enforcement agencies and broadcasters. An urgent AMBER Alert bulletin is issued by law enforcement in the most serious child-abduction cases that meet specific criteria. The goal of an AMBER Alert is to instantly galvanize the entire community to assist in the search for and safe recovery of the child. A total of 53 new AMBER Alert Facebook pages have been created – available for every U.S. state as well as Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands and District of Columbia.

- » To watch the press conference about AMBER Alerts on Facebook, go to:  
<http://www.livestream.com/facebookdclive>
- » For more information about the AMBER Alert program, visit:  
<http://www.amberalert.gov>
- » To get AMBER Alerts through Facebook, go to <http://www.facebook.com> and search for "AMBER Alert" + "Your State," or, to register for the District of Columbia, go directly to:  
<http://www.facebook.com/AMBERAlertDC>

## WITH THE COLDER WEATHER HERE, DON'T MAKE YOUR VEHICLE AN EASY TARGET

With colder temperatures taking hold in DC, there's something that police officers are on the lookout for: motorists who leave their vehicles running while unattended. Year to date, almost 4,000 vehicles were reported stolen in DC, according to preliminary statistics. And while it is impossible to tell how many auto thefts are the result of running vehicles left unattended, national statistics show that more than 20 percent of stolen autos had the key left in the ignition. As colder temperature settle in, some drivers will be tempted to run their vehicle to warm it up, while they remain indoors. Other motorists may leave their vehicles running while they dash into a convenience store or other location. Their reasoning: they will be away from their cars for only a "brief" minute or two. In either instance, the practice is unwise, unsafe and illegal in the District of Columbia. Some auto thieves need as little as a minute to break into and steal a vehicle that is locked and without a key. The time needed to steal a car that is unlocked, unattended and running is literally a matter of seconds. And under DC law, motorists who leave a motor vehicle running and unattended can receive a \$50 ticket and the vehicle may be impounded. This cold-weather season, the MPD asks all motorists to take appropriate measures to avoid being the victim of auto theft and to never leave their vehicles running unattended.

- » For more auto theft prevention and other safety tips, go to:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/safety>

## JANUARY IS NATIONAL STALKING AWARENESS MONTH

Stalking is a crime that affects 3.4 million victims a year. MPD honors all survivors of stalking, as well as victims of stalking who are no longer with us. National Stalking Awareness Month was launched to increase the public's understanding of the crime.

Stalking occurs when a person repeatedly behaves or acts in a way that takes over your life and causes mental distress or fear for your life. Stalking is a series of actions that puts a person in fear for their safety. The stalker may follow you, harass you, call you on the phone, watches your home, send you emails you don't want, or other things that frighten you.

Stalking is a serious crime, like sexual assault and domestic violence; it's about power, control, domination and doing harm. It affects friends, family members, and co-workers of the victim. Stalking is any behavior that would make a reasonable person feel threatened, intimidated, annoyed, or afraid.

Stalking behavior is not about love, lust, or desire. It is recognized as severe crime against victims. Some examples of stalking behavior include: pursuing a relationship that you don't want; making threats that compromise your safety or the safety of someone close to you; following you and calling repeatedly when you have made it clear you don't want calls; harming you. To truly understand stalking behavior, consider this scenario:

*He watches your home day and night. Whenever you leave home, he follows you, sitting for hours on end outside places like your workplace, friends' homes, and shopping malls. He calls you on the telephone — both at work and at home — dozens of times every day. During the calls, he makes you aware that he knows where you've been, whom you've talked to, and what you're wearing. You change your telephone number to an unlisted number, but somehow he discovers the new number. The calls continue. Letters and messages from him pour into your home and workplace. You learn that this person has been asking family members, friends, and business acquaintances about you, apparently compiling reams of information from any source he can gain access to, legally or not.*

Women stalk, but most stalkers are men — nearly 90 percent. A stalker is much more likely to be someone you know than someone you don't know. Someone who is a stalker may start with small, annoying, persistent actions and may move to criminal behavior.

If you believe you are being stalked, it's important to find an ally. The first thing to do is tell your family, roommates, trusted friends, and co-workers. Do not keep it to yourself. There's nothing to be ashamed of. Remember: You are not to blame for the stalker's behavior. Contact the police and report the crime. Formulate a safety plan, and keep a log of all communications, threats, email, mail or other contacts.

» If you are being stalked, you are not alone. For more information about, resources on, and counseling for stalking, visit:  
<http://www.stalkingawarenessmonth.org>

» The Victim Specialists Unit provides support, information, and referrals to victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. To learn more about the VSU or to contact a specialist, go to:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/vsu>

### DATA BOX

<b>Homicides</b>	as of 1/14/11
2011: 5	
2010: 5	
% Change: No Change	
Closure Rate: 60% (3 closures)	
<b>Adult Arrests</b>	week end. 1/8/11
Data Not Available	
<b>Juvenile Activity</b>	week end. 1/8/11
Data Not Available	
<b>Firearm Recoveries</b>	as of 1/10/10
January: 63	
2011 Total: 63	
<b>Traffic Fatalities</b>	as of 1/7/11
2011: 3	
2010: 2	
% Change: 50%	

#### NEWS & NOTES

#### Also Noteworthy

##### Drug Free Zone in Effect in 4D.

Metropolitan Police are enforcing DC's anti-loitering law in a designated area of PSA 401 in Northwest. Get more information at <http://mpdc.dc.gov/DFZ>.

##### DPW Services Affected on MLK Day.

The Department of Public Works (DPW) that, on Monday, January 17, 2011, when the District observes Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, trash and recycling collections, street and alley cleaning, and parking enforcement will be suspended. All services will resume Tuesday, January 18, 2011.

##### MPD Accepts Cell Phone Donations.

Did you get a new Blackberry, iPhone, or Droid for the holidays? Please consider contributing your old cell phone to someone in need. Phones are collected by us and distributed to clients through our partner agencies. For more information on the cell phone collection program, including a list of donation sites, visit <http://mpdc.dc.gov/donatecellphone>.

#### Information, ideas, or comments about this service?

Send an e-mail to **KAYLIN CASTELLI**, Manager of Internet Communications, at [kaylin.castelli@dc.gov](mailto:kaylin.castelli@dc.gov)

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