

WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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



Friday, January 28, 2011

GET TIPS ON PREVENTING VEHICLE THEFT DURING 2011 WASHINGTON AUTO SHOW

Visitors to the 2011 Washington Auto Show will be able to do more than just check out the latest in new automobiles and accessories. They can also get valuable information and resources on how to protect their vehicles from theft. The safety tips are courtesy of the MPD. The Washington Auto Show runs from Friday, January 28, through Sunday, February 6, in the Washington Convention Center. Members of the MPD's Auto Theft Unit and the Washington Area Vehicle Enforcement (WAVE) team, as well as other area law enforcement agencies will be passing out safety tips and information on how to reduce the chances of your vehicle being stolen.

In 2010, 4,071 vehicles were reported stolen in DC, according to preliminary statistics. While there was a 15 percent increase in 2010 compared to 2009, far too many cars are stolen each year. To help protect automobiles from theft, motorists are encouraged to follow some steps to make your car – and the valuables in it – less attractive to thieves. The common-sense approach to protection is the simplest and most cost effective way to avoid would-be thieves. You should always secure your vehicle, even if you're parking for "just a minute." Do this by:

- Removing your keys from the ignition.
- Locking all of your doors.
- Closing all of your windows.
- Parking in a well-lit area.
- Never leaving your engine running and vehicle unlocked while you run into your home, a convenience store or anywhere else.

Also, a visible or audible device will alert thieves that your vehicle is protected. Popular devices include audible alarms, steering wheel locks, steering column collars, theft deterrent decals, and tire locks.

- » For more auto theft prevention and other safety tips, go to:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/safety>
- » For information on the 2011 Washington Auto Show, visit:
<http://www.washingtonautoshow.com>

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ALERT SYSTEM USES RAPID TEXT NOTIFICATION

The *Alert DC* system provides rapid text notification and update information during a major crisis or emergency. This system delivers important emergency alerts, notifications and updates on a range of devices including your email account, cell phone, pager, BlackBerry and wireless PDA. When an incident or emergency occurs, authorized DC Homeland Security & Emergency Management personnel can rapidly notify you using this community alert system. Alert DC is your personal connection to real-time updates, instructions on where to go, what to do, or what not to do, who to contact and other important information.

DC Police Alert is a similar alert system that enables the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to notify you quickly about crimes in your neighborhood that may affect you, your home or your business. When you sign up for DC Police Alert you can enter an address or choose a point of interest on the registration map. Then, when an incident occurs in your area, the MPD will send you a DC Police Alert message informing you about what has happened and giving you instructions about what to do.

- » **Alert DC** and **DC Police Alert** are available to citizens of the District of Columbia as well as individuals traveling to or working in the District. Sign up for an account to receive alerts and emergency notifications today at:
<https://textalert.ema.dc.gov/>
- » Learn more about DC Police Alert at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/>

MOTORISTS REMINDED TO TAKE EXTRA PRECAUTIONS WHEN DRIVING ON SNOWY OR ICY STREETS

Earlier this week, the DC Metropolitan Region was pummeled by a snowstorm that left many drivers in precarious situations. Although there is a little more snow in our future, the worst of it seems to have passed. Even so, the Metropolitan Police Department wants drivers to be prepared in the future. If the temperatures drop below freezing, the streets can quickly get slick, forming a thin sheet of ice on the pavement.

Whenever the weather becomes unpleasant, motorists are advised drive with caution. If it's snowing or icy, stay far back from plows and spreaders so the drivers can see you. Remember that when it rains, sleet or snows, travelling in your vehicle will take longer than usual. Please be patient. Do not race to pass other vehicles, especially working plows or spreaders, as this is dangerous to you, the snow crews, and other motorists. Getting to your final destination safely is the number one priority, so maintain a safe distance between your vehicle and other cars, giving yourself the extra time and space necessary to stop during inclement weather.

In addition, commuters and residents are reminded to:

- Do not drive distracted.
- Listen to media reports for weather updates.
- Remember that driving on ice is significantly different than driving on snow. No cars handle well on ice. Even the tires a four-wheel-drive SUV will skid on ice.
- Drivers should use extreme caution and maintain safe speeds and distances from other vehicles during inclement weather.
- Pay attention to the road conditions, particularly black ice which can be deceptive in its appearance giving the driver a false sense of security on the road.
- Take note of Variable Message Signs placed strategically along local highways and corridors with messages like "Bridge Freezes before Roadway" and/or "Caution — Icy Conditions."
- Black ice is transparent ice located on the roadway making it very difficult to detect and becoming a major hazard to motorists. Warnings like the ones listed above are used to alert motorists where black ice is likely to occur.

Please remain alert and be aware of surrounding conditions including other vehicles and pedestrians.

» The District of Columbia announces information on how the streets will be treated during a snowstorm online. If you hear a weather report and want to see if the city plans to salt the streets or plow, go to:

<http://dc.gov>

» If you need to request a city service, call the DC City Service Request Center at 3-1-1, or visit:

<http://311.dc.gov>

DATA BOX

Homicides	as of 1/28/11
2011: 9	
2010: 9	
% Change: No Change	
Closure Rate: 44.4% (4 closures)	
Adult Arrests	week end. 1/22/11
Data Not Available	
Juvenile Activity	week end. 1/22/11
Data Not Available	
Firearm Recoveries	as of 1/24/10
January: 141	
2011 Total: 141	
Traffic Fatalities	as of 1/28/11
2011: 3	
2010: 2	
% Change: 33.3%	

NEWS & NOTES

Also Noteworthy

Get AMBER Alerts through Facebook. The goal of an AMBER Alert is to instantly galvanize the entire community to assist in the search for and the 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 get DC AMBER

Alerts, go to <http://www.facebook.com/AMBERAlertDC>.

Hypothermia Watch Partner Program. The Department of Human Services' Hypothermia Watch Partner Program is designed to prevent hypothermia deaths among the homeless by providing District citizens with a hotline number they can call to have homeless persons who are outside in freezing temperatures picked up by a van and transported to a local shelter. You can call the shelter hotline at **1 (800) 535-7252**.

MPD Accepts Cell Phone Donations.

Did you recently get a new Blackberry, iPhone, or Droid? Are you wondering what to do with your old phone? Please consider contributing your old cell phone to someone in need. Phones are collected by Victim Specialists 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

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