

WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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



Friday, April 13, 2012

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AGENCIES PARTNER TO PROTECT SMART PHONES

On April 10, Mayor Gray thanked officials from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and CTIA-The Wireless Association for working with the District's Metropolitan Police Chief, Cathy L. Lanier, in coming to an agreement that will provide new tools to law enforcement officials across the country as they combat a wave of crimes targeting smartphone users becoming victims. Soon, stolen smart phones will have little to no value to a street criminal. In the next few months, cellular carriers will begin working to stop service to any cell phone that is reported stolen and launch a campaign to encourage smart phone owners to protect their phones.

Cell phone theft is a growing problem, and the problem isn't just that people are losing their valuable property. Oftentimes, these property crimes escalate to become violent robberies, where the victims are injured for their electronic devices. Currently, cell phones are taken in 38 percent of all robberies in the District of Columbia. That's an increase of 54 percent since 2007. In addition to the loss and injury experienced during the initial crime, there is an added risk of identity theft if the stolen smartphone isn't password protected to prevent a thief from getting access to private information on the device.

Smartphone owners are encouraged to do what they can to reduce their risk of becoming a victim of a robbery. The MPD offers the following tips:

- » **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 smartphone 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.

» Read the complete news release issued by the Federal Communications Commission online at: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/>

» The MPD offers a variety of safety tips, including a complete brochure on robbery prevention. Read the tips online or download brochures at: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/safety>



DC311 FREE SMARTPHONE APP OFFERS ALTERNATIVE METHOD TO REPORTING SERVICE REQUESTS

On April 11, 2012, Mayor Vincent C. Gray announced the official launch of the District's new DC311 smartphone app. This free download allows citizens to report service requests from their iPhone or Android mobile devices. Currently, there are over 80 different service requests to choose from, including complaints about trash, potholes, graffiti and illegal dumping.

"The new DC311 app provides another way to achieve a goal I announced during my State of the District Address this year: making the District government the nation's best and most responsive at providing services to our residents," Mayor Gray said. "With this emerging technology, we continue to ensure that the District is a safe and beautiful place for all of our residents and visitors by giving them a tool for real-time collaboration with our government. If you see a pothole, graffiti, or a broken streetlight, you can snap a photo of it and send it directly to 311! Now there is, literally, an app for that – and within 30 seconds you can be on your way to a resolution."

This new tool, together with the Citywide Call Center and 311Online, is yet another way the community can report a problem. Information from all these sources is funneled into one database for tracking and resolution. The free app automatically pinpoints the location of the reported problem using GPS technology. Registered users can also attach a photo and provide the exact location for the service request. Once the request is submitted, users will receive an e-mail from 311 confirming receipt of the request, including the service request number. They will also receive a follow-up e-mail when the request has been closed by the servicing agency. Citizens can also track the status of their requests any time.

- » Download the DC311 smartphone app at:
<http://ouc.dc.gov/page/dc-311-smartphone-app>
- » Request city services by calling 3-1-1 or visit the website:
<http://311.dc.gov/>



NEWS & NOTES

Also Noteworthy

Street Closures for Cherry Blossom Festival and Parade.

The Japanese Street Festival, Sakura Matsuri, and Cherry Blossom Festival Parade will take place on Saturday, April 14. Streets closed for the festival include Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, between 9th and 14th Streets on Saturday, from 11 am – 6 pm. The parade is set to begin at 10 am and will proceed up Constitution Avenue, from 7th to 17th Streets, NW. Parade street closures should run from 5 am – 2 pm. For more information, go to <http://www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org/>.

Street Closures Emancipation Day Parade and Festival. The Emancipation Day Parade is scheduled to be held on Monday, April 16, 2012. The parade will begin at 11 am and end approximately at 2 pm. Street closings will begin at 8 am. All streets affected by this event are expected to be reopened at approximately 3 pm. However, some streets will remain closed until 11:00 pm due to fireworks display. The event listings for the 150th Commemorative Anniversary of the Emancipation Act in the District of Columbia can be found at <http://www.emancipation.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>.

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>.

DATA BOX

Homicides	as of 4/13/12
2012: 19	
2011: 29	
% Change: -34.5%	
Closure Rate: 63.1% (12 closures)	
Firearm Recoveries	as of 4/9/12
April: 51	
2012 Total: 560	
Traffic Fatalities	as of 4/13/12
2012: 6	
2011: 13	
% Change: -53.9%	

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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