

WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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



Friday, November 23, 2012

MPD OFFERS TIPS ON HOW TO STAY SAFE DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

With Thanksgiving behind us, and “Black Friday” here, the holiday season is finally upon us. This year, 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.

As you gear up for the holidays, the MPD offers the following tips on protecting yourself and your property. While shopping, stay alert and aware of what’s going on around you. Park in a well-lighted space, and be sure to lock the car, close the windows, and hide shopping bags and gifts in the trunk. Avoid carrying large amounts of cash; pay with a check or credit card whenever possible. To deter pickpockets and purse-snatchers, don’t overburden yourself with packages. Remember to be extra careful with purses and wallets during the holiday season – carry a purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps; put a wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket. If you’re shopping with kids, teach them to go to a store clerk or security guard if you get separated.

Loading up on all those gifts is a sign of progress in the holiday shopping. But if those packages are left out in the open after they’re in the car, your car has become a likely target for thieves. Remember the old cliché “Out of sight, out of mind?” The same idea applies to items in your car. Always lock your vehicle and store all items out of sight. Breaking into an empty car isn’t worth a thief’s time. However, anything left in plain view – from your holiday gifts to spare change, sunglasses, CDs, cell phones or briefcases – may tempt a thief. Help prevent your vehicle from being stolen by always locking your car and using anti-theft devices.

You also need to take precautions at home. Criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts. And it’s not uncommon for people to try to take advantage of others’ generosity during the holidays by going door-to-door for charitable donations when there’s no charity involved. Ask for identification, and find out how the funds will be used. If you aren’t satisfied, don’t give. Help a charitable organization you know and like instead.

If you are traveling, get an automatic timer for your lights; ask a neighbor to watch your home, shovel snow, and park in the driveway from time to time; and don’t forget to have mail and newspaper delivery stopped. If it piles up, it’s a sure sign you’re gone.

When you go out for the evening, remember to turn on lights and a radio or TV so it looks like someone’s home. Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave, even if it’s just for a few minutes. Also, don’t display gifts where they can be seen from outside.

Throughout the holiday season, please remember to celebrate responsibly. Drinking and driving is a danger to everyone on the road. Anyone with a BAC of .08 or higher is in violation of DC law and may go to jail. Remember that the risk isn’t worth it—if you choose to drink alcohol at a party, don’t drive. Take a cab, use public transportation or a designated driver, or call SoberRide® (800-200-TAXI), a free cab service in DC and the surrounding area active from December 14 through January 1. Have fun, but remember to celebrate responsibly.

- » Get more holiday safety tips at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/holidaysafety>
- » Theft and Pickpocket Prevention tips as well as a number of other safety brochures are available at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/safety>
- » Learn more about the penalties for drinking and driving in the District of Columbia at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/dui>
- » Get more information about the Washington Regional Alcohol Program’s Holiday SoberRide® Campaign at:
<http://www.wrap.org/soberride/>



PROVIDE 911 WITH A SAFETY PROFILE THROUGH SMART911

Smart911, a initiative by the Office of Unified Communications (OUC) improves public safety by providing immediate crucial information to emergency responders. Smart911 provides emergency responders with much more complete information about

911 callers so they can respond to the right location, with the right personnel and the right equipment. Smart911 is a public/private partnership enabling the creation of a critical caller database that integrates with the District's 911 system.

"Smart911 will allow our responders to save lives and resolve emergency situations much more effectively," said Mayor Gray. "This is an excellent example of how technology can improve a critical public-safety system for the benefit of all."

Coupled with the DC 311 smart-phone app, the availability of Smart911 adds to OUC Director Jennifer Greene's goal of making OUC the nation's most efficient and responsive emergency communications agency. "Our goal is to help residents help us provide the best possible service, and I think Smart911 does just that," said Greene. "This is an innovative approach to enhancing public safety. Overall, I think the service will provide users a greater sense of security in knowing our first responders have information that could ultimately save their lives."

With Smart911, residents are able to create a Safety Profile at www.smart911.com that is automatically displayed to 9-1-1 during emergency calls. The profile can include home and work addresses associated with mobile phone numbers, specific medical conditions and disabilities, all family members, vehicle information and even information about pets.

Residents are encouraged to create their Safety Profile with Smart911 today to have their information immediately available to 911. Smart911 data is private and secure, is only used for emergency responses, and is only made available to the 911 system in the event of an emergency call.



» Create your safety profile with Smart911 online at:
<https://www.smart911.com/>

» Smart911 is supported by the DC Office of Unified Communications (OUC), which oversees the 9-1-1 call center in the District of Columbia. Learn more about OUC at:
<http://ouc.dc.gov/>

» Need to report a non-emergency issue in your neighborhood? Try the DC311 Smartphone app. Get more information at:
<http://ouc.dc.gov/page/dc-311-smartphone-app>

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>.

Report Crimes Against Children through the CyberTipline. The 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>.

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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