

# WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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



*Friday, December 7, 2012*

## LOST OR STOLEN SMART PHONE? BRICK IT!

In Washington, DC, New York and other large American cities, roughly 40% of all robberies now involve smart phones—endangering the physical safety of victims, as well as the security of the personal information on the stolen devices. 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.

If a person's smart phone is lost or stolen, he or she may now contact the carrier and ask to have that device remotely disabled. If a smart phone is rendered inactive in such a manner, it's often considered to be as useful as a "brick." These "bricked" phones are of little use to thieves because they can't be reactivated after being sold on the black market. The MPD is encouraging victims of smart phone thefts to call their carriers and to "brick it" in an effort to deter smart phone theft.

By bricking your phone, you will permanently disable your device and help us eliminate the black market for stolen smart phones. We can reduce robberies by eliminating the reason criminals steal smart phones in the first place!



» Mayor Vincent Gray held a press conference to announce the "Brick It!" initiative on December. Read the complete release at:

<http://mayor.dc.gov/release/mayor-vincent-gray-announces-anti-cell-phone-theft-initiative-and-website>

» Get more information on "bricking" your phone at: <http://brickit.dc.gov>

» The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) offers information on how to safeguard yourself against wireless device theft at:

<http://www.fcc.gov/guides/stolen-and-lost-wireless-devices>

» If your smart phone is lost or stolen, contact your carrier. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has a contact list of service providers at: <http://www.fcc.gov/stolen-phones-contact-numbers>

## ENJOY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON SAFELY 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.

» 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>

**Continued on Back**

## ENJOY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON SAFELY ON THE ROADS AND IN THE SHOPS (Continued from Front)

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.

## POLICE RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM OFFERS COMMUNITY MEMBERS INSIGHT INTO THE DAILY OPERATIONS OF THE MPD

The Metropolitan Police Department's Police Ride-Along program allows residents to accompany officers during their tour of duty in a police vehicle. "Ride-Along" means to be an official passenger in a patrol vehicle, accompanying a police officer during part of a normal tour of duty. The primary purpose of a police Ride-Along is to provide an opportunity for the community to see firsthand the day-to-day workings of law enforcement in the District of Columbia. The Ride-Along participant receives important insight into what it means to be a police officer. Criminal Justice students and individuals interested in law enforcement careers have found it particularly useful. The Ride-Along program fosters a better understanding of the challenges, hazards and rewards of the police officer's role in the community. Other Ride-Along goals are to:

- provide citizens the opportunity to get to know their police officers.
- offer citizens interested in a career in law enforcement an opportunity to examine the job.
- educate the community about the responsibilities of police officers.
- provide an opportunity for police officers to get to know their community.

» For additional contact information and to download an application to participate in the MPD's Police Ride-Along program, go to: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/ridealong>

### 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](mailto:kaylin.castelli@dc.gov)

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