

WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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



Friday, September 20, 2013

BUCKLE UP, DC: KEEP YOUR KIDS SAFE ON THE ROAD USING THE PROPER CHILD SAFETY SEAT

Today, more parents and caregivers than ever before secure their kids in child safety seats. According to the Data from the Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), show an estimated 8,959 lives were saved by child restraint systems from 1975 to 2008.

But amid this good news is an alarming fact: too many parents still don't use the full range of child safety seats, especially booster seats. Safety experts strongly recommend that children should not be moved into regular seat belts until they are at least four feet, nine inches (4' 9") tall, weigh about 80 pounds, and are approximately eight years old. And DC law now requires booster seats for children up to age 8. Yet, booster seat use for children ages four to eight is still less than 10 percent nationally.

As part of Buckle Up America, the Metropolitan Police Department encourages all parents and caregivers to know about and follow the law, to acquire and use age-appropriate child safety restraints, to have their child safety seats inspected, and to follow the four essential steps to protecting children in motor vehicles. The four steps to protect your children as they grow older are listed in the steps below. Remember to have safety seats inspected on a regular basis. Seat belts can seriously injure or kill small children who are not properly placed in child safety seats.

» For more information about Child Passenger Saety, please contact Officer Arlinda Page at (202) 437-8030 or visit the website at: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/page/child-passenger-safety-awareness>

Four Steps to Car Seat Safety

Step 1: Infants

From birth to 1 year (or up to approx. 20 lbs), use a rear-facing car seat.

Step 2: Toddlers

From 1-4 years (20-40 lbs), use a forward-facing child seat, or a convertible car seat.

Step 3: Younger Children (40 - 80 lbs. and up to 54")

For younger children (40-80 lbs and up to 54"), use a belt-positioning booster seat (high-back or booster without a back).

Step 4: Older Children

(8 years or older, more than 80 lbs. and taller than 54")

For older children (over 80 lbs and over 54"), use a seat belt. Be sure the child is large enough for a correct fit.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS OFFERS GRAFFITI REMOVAL SERVICES

Graffiti is generally described as a drawing or inscription made on any exterior surface—from street signs to sidewalks—for the purpose of being seen by the public. The inscription can be rudimentary or elaborate, colorful or plain black. Gang members use graffiti to define territory and intimidate rivals.

In an effort to keep the District clean and attractive, the DC Department of Public Works (DPW) deploys graffiti removal crews to clean graffiti from public space and private property. When power washing is impractical, crews resort to more low-tech methods, such as simply painting over the graffiti. "Tags," those spray-painted black squiggles sometimes found on traffic signs, fences or metal garage doors, are often removed with chemical-treated cleaning cloths.

Owners of private property may request graffiti removal services from the city. Although the service is free, property owners must read and sign a graffiti removal waiver of liability form. Unfortunately, DPW can't guarantee that the graffiti will be completely removed by chemical means.

Additionally, since paint colors offered by the city are limited to four or five basic shades, homeowners may want to try painting out graffiti themselves. To request graffiti removal on private property and/or to get a waiver form, contact the Mayor's Citywide Call Center at 311.

» For more information on graffiti removal by the DPW, including the information you should provide for service and hours of operation, go to: <http://dpw.dc.gov>

» To request graffiti removal on private property and/or to get a waiver form, contact the Mayor's Citywide Call Center at 311.

FOLLOWING THE LAUNCH OF THE LATEST APPLE PRODUCT, SMARTPHONE USERS ARE REMINDED TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS

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. 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.

» Lost or stole phone? Brick it! By bricking your phone, you will permanently disable your device and help us eliminate the black market for stolen smart phones:

<http://mpdc.dc.gov/brickit>

» 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>



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>.

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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