

WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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



Friday, November 20, 2015

REDUCE THE RISK OF HAVING YOUR MAIL OR PACKAGES STOLEN

With the holidays approaching, many people will be turning to the internet to buy gifts for friends and family. If you're not home to receive the package, it may be left in plain sight of thieves. Here's what you can do to reduce the risk of having your packages stolen:

- Get a tracking number from the shipping company.
- Require a signature with the delivery.
- If you won't be home, have the company leave the package at a local shipping center.
- Set up an obvious surveillance camera with your home security system.
- If UPS is making the delivery, get onboard with their UPS My Choice program, which sends an e-mail or text message to the customer just prior to package arrival; it will be rerouted if nobody is home.
- Insist that the driver leave the package in an inconspicuous area.
- Have the driver leave the package at your apartment's or condo's office.
- Retrieve your mail as quickly as possible after delivery.
- If you can't retrieve it daily, have a trusted person get it.
- If you're traveling, have the post office hold your mail until you get back.
- Never received mail you were expecting? Contact the sender to see if it was sent. If so, file a complaint with the post office. This also applies if the contents of mail are missing.
- Bring your checks or money orders to a postal collection box (personally give it to a postal worker) for the delivery driver to pick up; don't leave checks or money orders in your home mailbox.
- Never leave packages outside your door.
- Alert recipients of your packages as to when they are to expect them.
- Insure any packages you send.
- Consider starting a neighborhood watch program. By exchanging work and vacation schedules with trusted friends and neighbors, you can watch each other's mailboxes (as well as homes).
- If you observe a mail thief at work, call the local police immediately, and then call the US Postal Inspection Service at (877) 876-2455.

» If you feel that you are a victim of a crime involving the mail, submit an on-line complaint at:
<https://postalinspectors.uspis.gov/investigations/mailfraud/fraudscchemes/mailtheft/ReportMailTheft.aspx>

Along with notifying MPD, the US Postal Inspection Service advises the following: "If you believe your mail was stolen, report it immediately to your local postmaster or nearest Postal Inspector. You'll be asked to file a formal complaint using PS Form 2016, Mail Theft and Vandalism Complaint. By analyzing information collected from the form, Postal Inspectors may determine whether your problem is isolated or part of a larger mail theft problem in your neighborhood—and it may help Postal Inspectors locate and apprehend the thieves."

Consult with your local postmaster for the most up-to-date regulations on mailboxes, including the availability of locked centralized or curbside mailboxes.

MPD OFFERS INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND YOUTH ON UNDERSTANDING AND AVOIDING GANGS

Joining a gang or crew can give you a sense of belonging and acceptance, but often being associated with one can lead to dangerous consequences. The MPD has developed a brochure that offers some ways to explore alternatives to gang membership and how to safely “leave” a gang if you’re already involved. Some of these steps take time, but with dedication and the support of your family, you can change your life.

A gang is a group of individuals that band together for a common cause and are involved in criminal activity. Many gangs are highly organized and operate across state lines. A crew is a more loosely-knit group, often based on a neighborhood. These are usually individuals who grew up in or who have family roots in that neighborhood. Regardless of gang or crew affiliation, both groups are often associated with a variety of crimes, including narcotics trafficking, gun violations, assaults, and even homicides. Female gangs or crews are growing in DC as well. Gang violence is a community problem.

The MPD’s webpage on gangs helps explain who joins these groups and why and provides signs of possible gang involvement. It also offers suggestions for what parents can do to protect their children and how young people can avoid getting involved.

» For more information and to download a printable version of the brochure, go to:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/gangs>

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

The MPD’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>.

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>.

Support the Washington DC Police Foundation. The Washington DC Police

Foundation is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization that brings together the business, civic, and other professional communities to promote public safety by providing financial and in-kind resources to the MPD, expanding public safety awareness, and advancing public safety policy and initiatives. Learn more about the extraordinary support the Washington DC Police Foundation provides to the MPD. Learn more about the Foundation at <http://www.dcpolicefoundation.org>.

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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