



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION THREAT INTELLIGENCE CONSORTIUM

Intelligence Bulletin
December 2, 2019

Product No. 2019-11-052
NTIC SIN 4.2 | HSEC 8.8, 8.10

Do You Hear What I Hear? I Hear to Plan Ahead for the Holidays.

District residents are encouraged to remain vigilant and aware due to the higher risks of theft, mass crowd panic, and inclement weather during the winter holiday season. Various events planned for Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, and New Year's in the District during November through early January likely will draw large crowds that could put residents and visitors at risk. Following the basic guidance and tips below can ensure that District residents can mitigate risks while enjoying holiday celebrations.

Santa Might Leave Packages, but Others Can Steal Them

Criminals look for packages left unattended on doorsteps or in cars. A review of Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) crime data shows theft was the most common crime in the District during the holiday season over the past five years.

- On December 23, 2018, MPD arrested a man who stole 13 packages left in front of homes in Northwest. A 2017 study found that more than 25 million Americans have had a package stolen from their front porch or doorstep.
- Approximately two weeks before Christmas 2017, a car belonging to a Hyattsville man was stolen from a shopping center parking lot; the car trunk contained hundreds of dollars worth of presents.

District residents can take the following steps to limit the risk of doorstep package theft:

- Install a security camera.
- Schedule packages to arrive during hours when someone can receive them.
- Send packages to a secure location, like Amazon Lockers.
- Arrange for packages to be held at a USPS facility, where they can stay for up to 30 days.



Santa deciding which District residents made the nice list this year. (Source: BBC)

Stay Vigilant When Rockin' Around the National Christmas Tree



The 2018 US Capitol Christmas Tree (Source: WTOP)

Crowded indoor and outdoor venues can be vulnerable to mass crowd panics in response to false reports of gunfire, situations that can cause stampedes and potentially injuries or deaths from trampling. When attending events, residents and visitors to the District should maintain situational awareness, listen to law enforcement guidance, and move with the crowd during panic situations.

On June 8, 2019, seven people were injured during the Capital Pride Parade when attendees fled in panic after hearing rumors of gunshots.

In the event of a mass crowd panic, attendees are encouraged to:

- Stay in communication with friends and family, if possible.
- Remain calm and do not panic.
- Move with the crowd to avoid being trampled and injured
- Find shelter or cover, if possible.
- Find non-traditional escape routes and avoid choke exits.
- If you are in the center of a panicked crowd, work your way to the edges where there are fewer people.

Learn more about ways to protect yourself in the NTIC's product "Avoiding Mass Crowd Panic"

Be Careful When Walking in a Winter Wonderland

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicts a warmer winter than average; however District residents should follow these snow safety tips in the case of inclement weather:

- Use safe form when shoveling snow to avoid back injuries.
- DC law requires residential and commercial property owners to remove snow/ice from the sidewalks around their property within the first eight hours of daylight after a storm ends.
- Dress properly in the cold with a hat, scarf, gloves, socks, and water-resistant shoes or boots.
- Wear outer clothing colors that contrast with white snow.
- Have key supplies at home before a storm, including a battery-powered radio, flashlight, extra batteries, extra food and water, first-aid supplies, emergency heating, snow-removal equipment, as well as, a working fire extinguisher and smoke detector.



A District resident showcases how to wear high-visibility clothing in snow (Source: The Washingtonian)