

# Media Release 09/20/16 - UPDATE

## Suspicious Activity

On September 19 more than one child reported seeing person(s) dressed in clown costumes with face paint on in Annapolis. The children reported incidents that occurred as far back as Thursday, September 15, in several different Annapolis neighborhoods. It appears that only children have seen the person(s) in the clown costume. Incidents were reported in the 700 block of Newtowne Drive, Bens Drive near Victor Parkway, and the 1400 block of Tyler Avenue. The most recent sighting reportedly occurred around 8:30 a.m. on September 19 on Bens Drive.

If you see someone dressed in a clown costume in an unusual place please call 9-1-1. If you have any information about these incidents please call our detectives at 410-260-3439.

There have been similar reports made in other states and the media attention those reports have garnered may have led to these reports. While these reports remain unconfirmed, the Annapolis Police Department would like to remind our residents of a few simple safety tips provided by the National Crime Prevention Council:

### What Parents Can Do:

- Know where your children are at all times: Make it a rule that your children must ask permission or check in with you before going anywhere.
- Point out safe places. Show your children safe places to play, safe roads and paths to take, and safe places to go if there's trouble.
- Teach children to trust their instincts. Explain that if they ever feel scared or uncomfortable, they should get away as fast as they can and tell an adult.
- Teach your children to be assertive. Make sure they know that it's okay to say no to an adult and to run.
- Encourage your children to play with others. There's safety in numbers!

### What Children Can Do:

- Don't talk to strangers.
- Don't take anything from strangers.
- Don't go anywhere with someone you don't know.
- Use the buddy system, avoid walking anywhere alone.
- When seeking help, always go to a trusted adult – teacher, coach, police officer, other parent, or older siblings.
- If a stranger grabs you, do everything you can to stop him or her from pulling you away. Drop to the ground, kick, hit, bite, and scream. Do whatever it takes to attract the attention of others who can help you. If someone is dragging you away, scream, "this is not my dad," or "this is not my mom."
- Report any suspicious activity to your local school and police department.

## **UPDATE**

On September 20, detectives continued to investigate this report of suspicious activity. As part of the investigation some of the children who originally reported encountering the clown on the way to school were interviewed again. The children admitted to making up the story about the clown.

There were rumors circulating Annapolis about people dressed like clowns trying to lure children into wooded areas, but NO reports have been made to the police. This is a good time to talk to children about spreading rumors, urban legends, and the importance of telling the truth. When reports like this are made it is our responsibility to err on the side of caution until the report can be confirmed or disproved. This takes officers away from other crimes they are investigating and other people who need our help.

Fortunately, in this case, limited police time and resources were used before the truth was uncovered. The children will not be charged with making a false police report.

### **Submitting Anonymous Tips to Metro Crime Stoppers of Maryland**

Metro Crime Stoppers of Maryland is an organization separate from the Annapolis Police Department. When you text, phone in, or submit your Annapolis crime tip online Metro Crime Stoppers receives your tip anonymously and only forwards your tip information to the Annapolis Police Department. No identifying information is ever forwarded to us. Please be assured that only your tip is communicated from Metro Crime Stoppers to the police department, not any identifying information about you. Metro Crime Stoppers uses a special coding system to protect your identity, they do not use Caller ID or record telephone conversations. If your tip leads to the arrest or indictment of a person for a felony you could qualify for up to a \$2,000 cash reward from Metro Crime Stoppers. You can submit a tip by calling 1-866-7LOCKUP (1-866-756-2587), texting CRIMES (274637) or visiting [www.metrocrimestoppers.org](http://www.metrocrimestoppers.org).

**If Your Tip to the Hotline Leads to an Arrest and Indictment of the Individuals that Committed the Above Crimes, You may be Eligible for a Cash Reward of Up to \$2,000!!!**

**If you have information on the above crime contact:**

**Metro Crime Stoppers Hotline Toll Free 1-866-7LOCKUP.**

**You can also provide information confidentially online through**

**<http://www.metrocrimestoppers.net/> or**

**by texting “MCS plus your message” to CRIMES (274637)**

**Calls are NOT Recorded AND Callers Remain Anonymous**