



Public Safety Bulletin #10

Theft from Vehicles

In the past two years, theft from vehicles has increased significantly based on drivers not taking simple precautions. Please protect your belongings by taking these suggestions:

- Just like any crime, auto burglaries are a crime of opportunity. Thieves will target vehicles that are parked in dark places, away from cameras or pedestrian activity. They will peer into a vehicle and look for items left out in the open, such as portable navigation systems, cell phones, laptops, wallets, purses and back packs. Two out of three cars usually have something of value left out in the open!
- Very few auto break-ins are “random” — the thieves see “something” in plain sight that’s valuable, or hints of possible hidden valuables. If practical, all your packages, bags, and devices should be secured in the trunk prior to arriving your destination.
- When pumping gas or paying for it, keep your wallet and purse with you; don’t leave it in the vehicle— criminals often target gas stations for this reason.
- Keep the inside of your vehicle clean; even if you just keep a lot of “junk” and non-valuable materials in the vehicle – the criminal doesn’t know that and may try to break in to sift through your vehicle’s contents.
- Lock all your vehicle’s doors, even if you plan to be gone for only a brief time. Many valuable items are stolen from unlocked vehicles where the owner was gone just for a few moments. It’s not at all uncommon for thieves to walk down a row of parked vehicles and check vehicle doors to see if they are unlocked – believe it or not at least 30% of all vehicles parked in a garage or parking lot are unlocked. Don’t leave any window open or even cracked open, including vent/wing windows and sun roofs.
- Don’t think your dark tinted windows will hide your valuables. Thieves often use flash lights to see through tint, and after-market tint is handy to keep all the broken glass in one “sheet” when they break out your window (and toss the broken window into your back seat or passenger seat to hide the evidence of the break-in from passersby).
- Set any alarm or anti-theft device. Many people believe that car- alarms no longer make a difference, but they can be an effective deterrent to an auto-burglar, who most often chooses the easiest target. If they have two cars to choose from, one with a visible indicator of an alarm system and one without, they will likely burglarize the one without (unless you’ve left out valuables just too good to ignore!). Locking your car and setting your alarm is just part of the solution.
- As a last line of defense (not really to prevent theft as much as to aid in recovery), mark your valuables. Recording serial numbers is important so that the stolen items can be entered into a Nation-wide stolen property system.

Call police by dialing 911

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